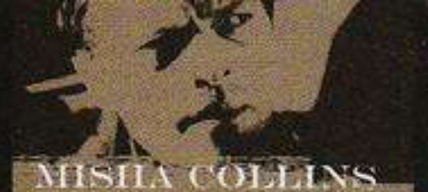


MISHA COLLINS INTERVIEW

Heavenly Creature

As one of the most dramatic new additions to the *Supernatural* mythology in season four, the angel Castiel has had a great influence on the Winchesters, particularly Dean. Actor Misha Collins spoke to *The Official Supernatural Magazine* about spreading his wings as this divine being...

Words: Jayne Nelson

After one of the most memorable entrances in *Supernatural* history in season four's *Lazarus Rising*, the angel Castiel fast became a fan favorite. That's largely down to the captivating performance of Misha Collins, who, after playing everything from a terrorist on *24* to a real-life serial killer in the controversial drama *Karla*, brings a sense of gravitas and contained power to the role. We caught up with him between episodes to find out more about why he thought he was going to be a demon, those pesky Lucifer rumors, and the weirder side of fandom...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Is it true that you originally auditioned as a demon?**

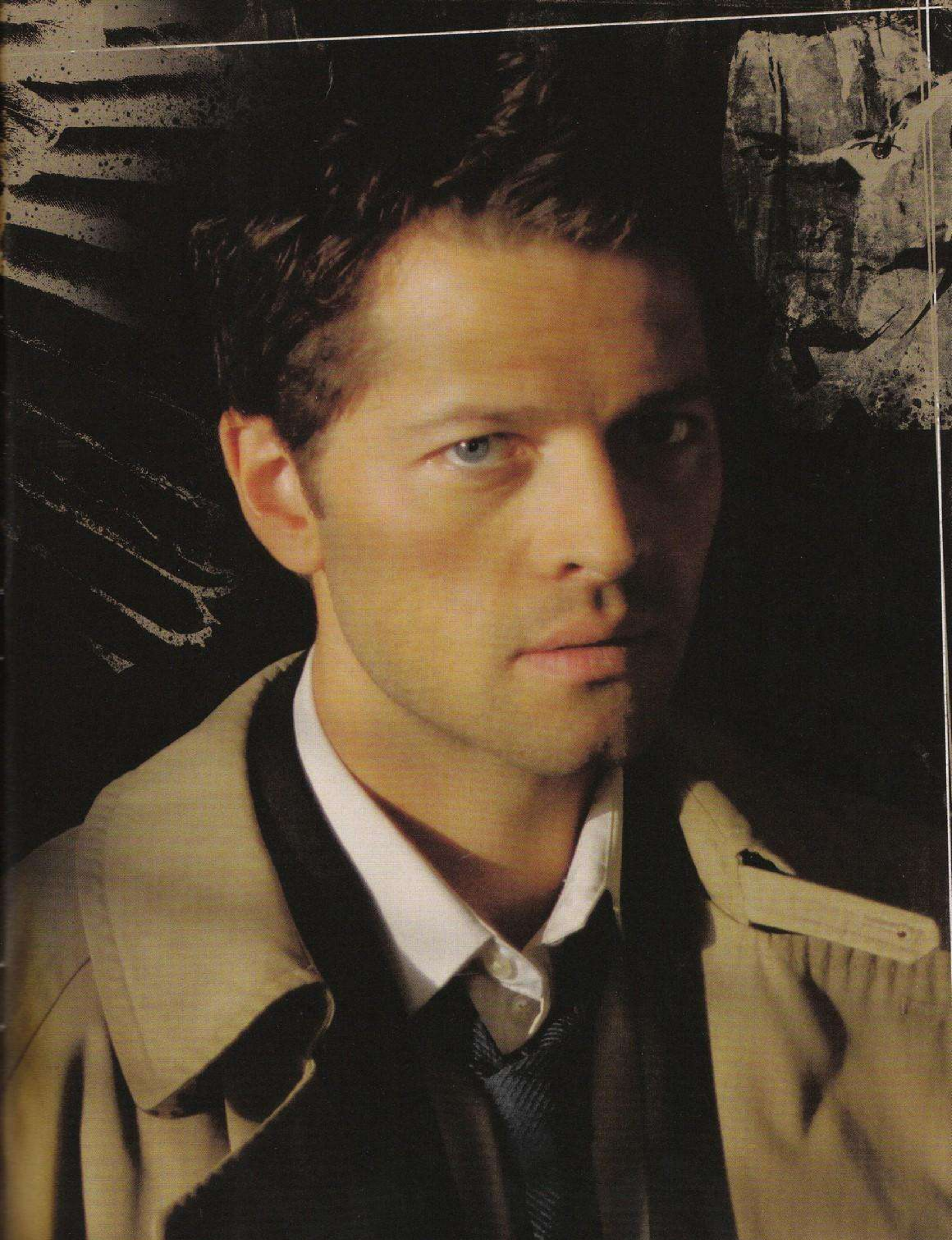
Misha Collins: Yes, it is! The fans of *Supernatural* are very devoted, and Eric [Kripke] was trying to obscure the fact that there was going to be an angel in the show from the fans. He sent out audition material for a demon, which I read through once and then he told me that actually, the role was [that of] an angel.

How do you approach playing an angel – it's not your average character, is it?

No, it's not! I've played serial killers, assassins... I haven't just played bad guys, but [I've never played anything] even remotely angelic before! I don't want to bore you with my philosophy of acting, but my philosophy is that humans have some universal qualities, so that when you play a character you're finding that character in yourself, and you harness one of many facets of humanity. When I got the role of an angel, and since he's not actually human, it kind of threw me for a loop! It's not a universal, human quality. But Eric gave me some direction, which was really helpful, and so did Phil Sgriccia, who was the director on the show [for *Are You There, God? It's Me... Dean Winchester*], and their direction was that Castiel's not been down on planet Earth for 2,000 years, so he hasn't been around human beings in all that time. There's a certain curiosity for him about them. That was really helpful. He seems incredibly old, and has a depth of experience and knowledge that's much greater than humans have. Angels are wise!

You seem to be playing him as though he's got a lot of power, and he's trying to keep it inside.

Yeah, I think so. I think that if you're really powerful, you don't really have to show it. Castiel doesn't have to be bombastic, because there's a clear sense about him that he's powerful, without him being demonstrative about it. But at the same time, from the first episode [of season four, *Lazarus Rising*] it's clear that if I'm not careful with my power I can harm people.



Will Castiel get the chance to kick some ass later on in the season, or are you not allowed to say?

[*Laughs*] We haven't shot much fighting – we had one big fight scene in episode 10 [*Heaven And Hell*], and I was pretty disappointed! I didn't feel like Castiel was great at fighting. There weren't many lightning bolts or things like that! But I think there will be ample opportunity in the future!

A lot of people would assume that, if you're playing an angel, he'd have fluffy wings and a harp and be a total goody-goody... have you come across that?

I think, generally speaking, that's what people think when they hear the word "angel." Which is really a modern opinion; historically, angels are really tough and badass. Somewhere along the way they got the fluffy wings and the harps and the perfectly formed cumulus clouds to sit upon, and they lost their edge. But I think that if you look back in the Bible and [other] ancient Christian lore, they're forces to be reckoned with. I think that's the angel prototype that Eric Kripke has been using. It's much more fun! It would be soooo boring to be a sweet little angel!

And there *is* another side, because in *It's The Great Pumpkin, Sam Winchester* we meet the angel Uriel, who's the bad cop to Castiel's good cop. That must be fun to play.

Yeah, it is. It's a totally different aspect to the character with Uriel being there. It's nice, because it shows that Castiel's got a softer side.

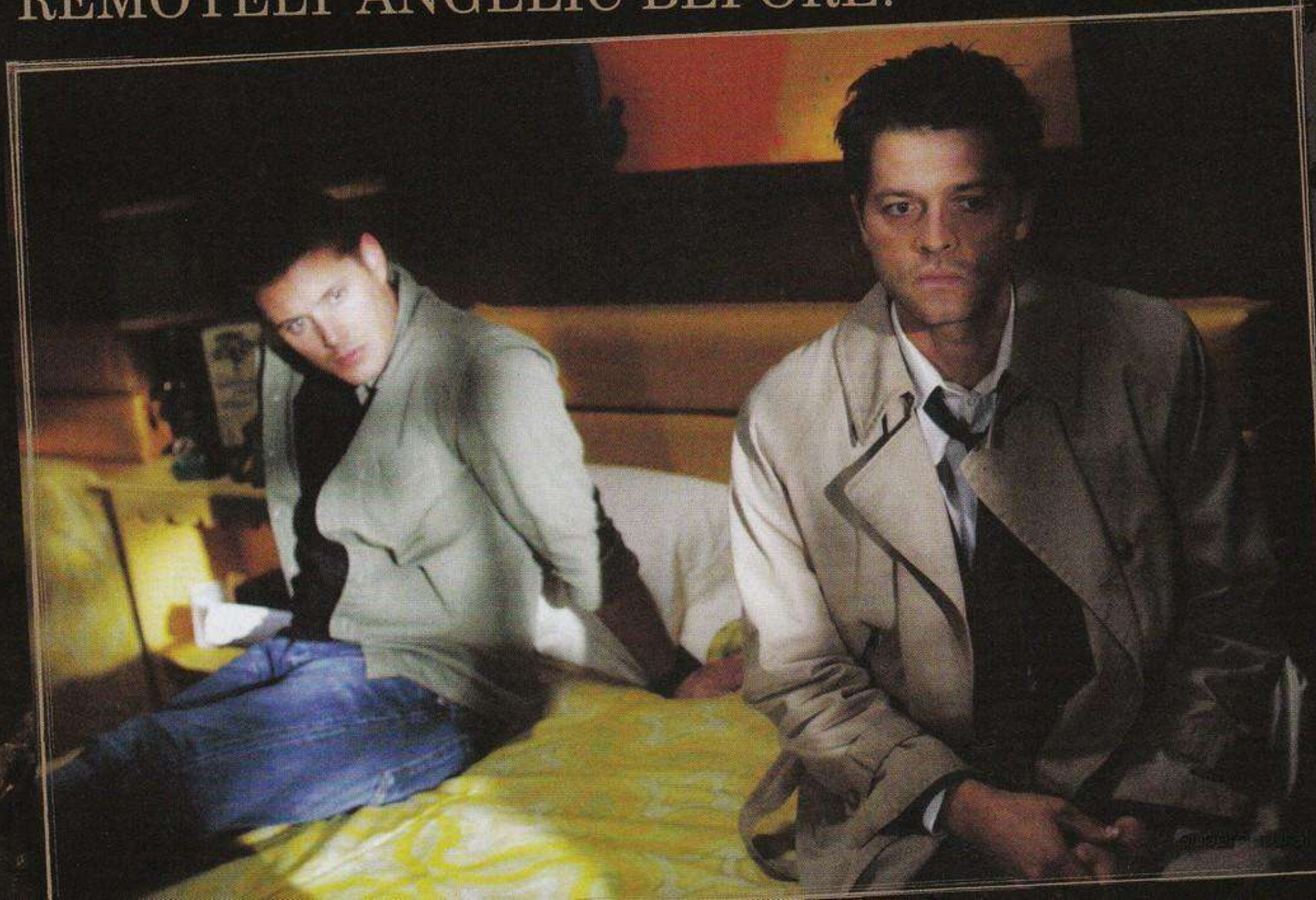
There have been a few fan theories flying around that Castiel's actually Lucifer in disguise!

I don't think that's the case, I really don't! But I don't know where things are going. I think that would be massively disappointing if it turned out that Eric was pulling the wool over our eyes with a total charade here. I don't think that's what's going on.

Do you even know for sure whether Castiel is good or bad?

My gut [feeling] is that he's good, but, you know, I'm not in the writers' room, so I don't know what schemes they're cooking up! But I don't think he's evil. In the last episode we shot [*It's The Great Pumpkin, Sam Winchester*] he has that heart-to-heart with Dean, and I think it's authentic. I don't think he's putting it on.

"I'VE PLAYED SERIAL KILLERS, ASSASSINS... I HAVEN'T JUST PLAYED BAD GUYS, BUT [I'VE NEVER PLAYED ANYTHING] EVEN REMOTELY ANGELIC BEFORE!"

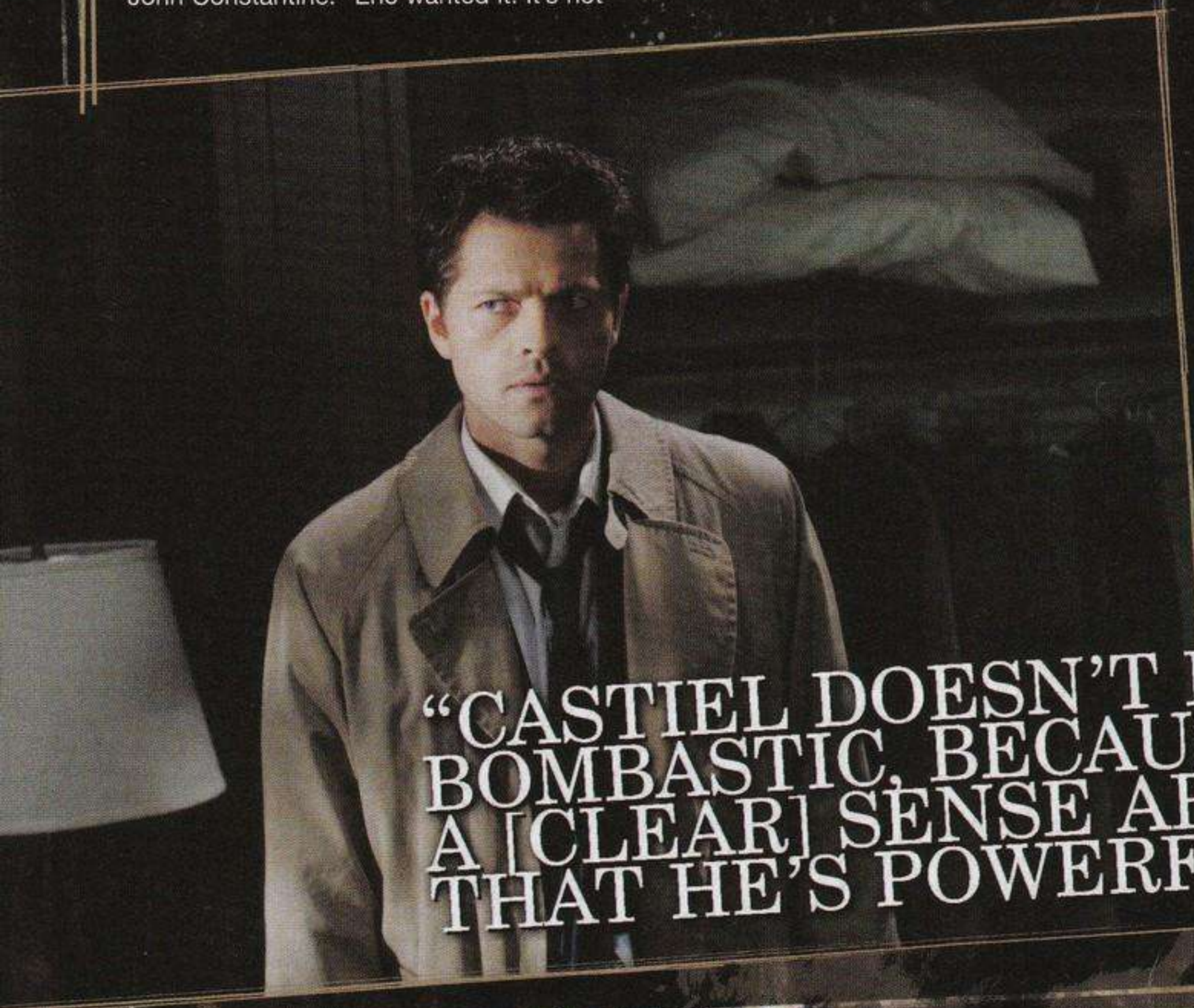


Really?
I had no idea! I've never been a big 'fan,' of any genre, that's just not me, but yeah… I'm totally [surprised by it.] I don't have a basis of comparison, I don't know how fandom has responded to any of the characters. I heard that Castiel got a really good reaction, and I'm glad to be on the fans' good side!

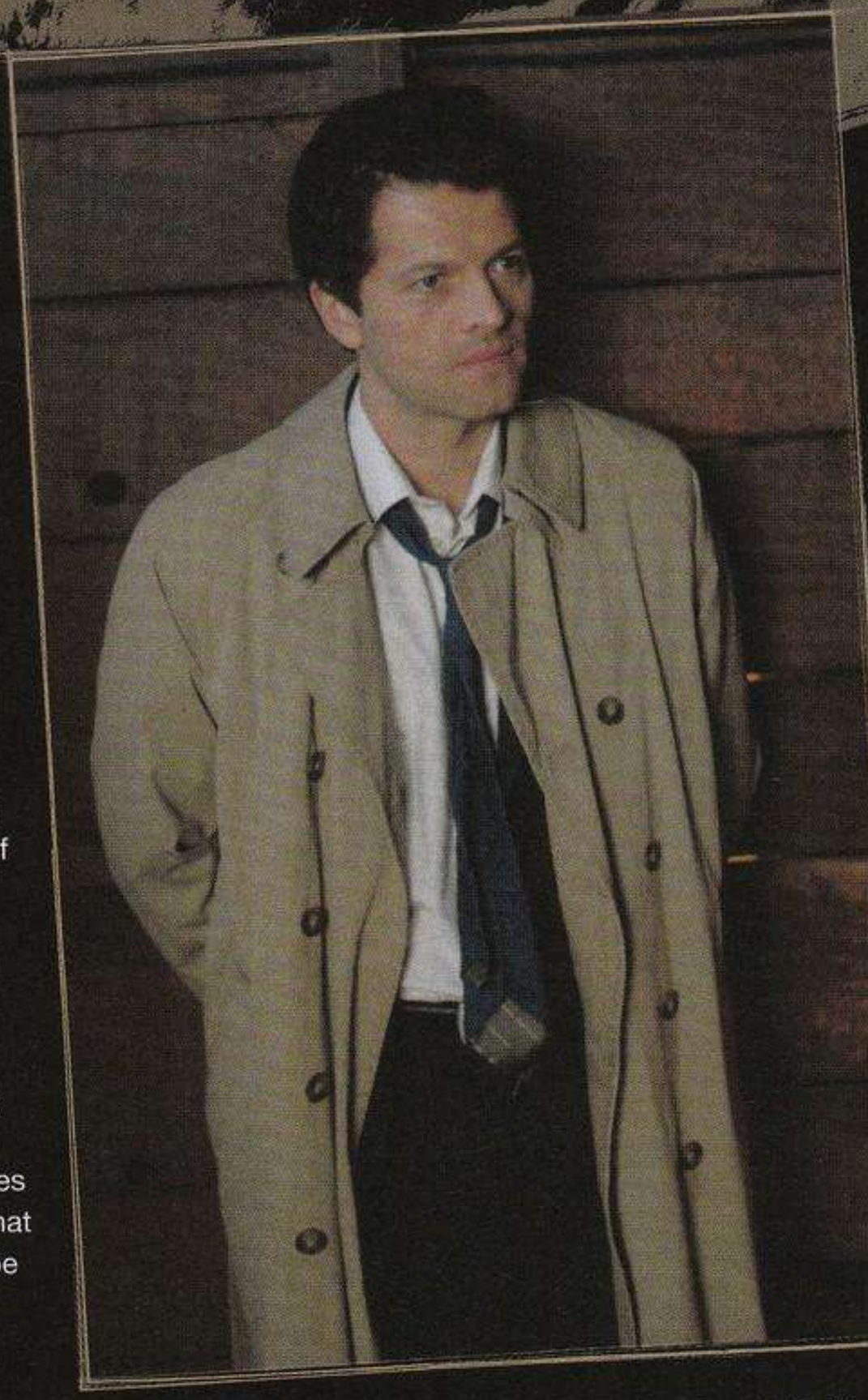
So have you actually been recognized by fans on the street – have people come up and spoken to you?
A little bit. One guy who approached me really didn't like my suit on the show. He really couldn't understand why an angel would be wearing it [*laughs*]! And if he *was* wearing it, why he wouldn't change his clothes at any point?

Do people come up to you and say "Hey, where's your wings?"
No, not yet. [*Laughs*]

Your outfit is a little bit like John Constantine's from the *Hellblazer* comic-book series. Do you know if that was deliberate?
It was in the first script as a parenthetical reference. I think it said something like "à la John Constantine." Eric wanted it. It's not



"CASTIEL DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BOMBASTIC, BECAUSE THERE'S A [CLEAR] SENSE ABOUT HIM THAT HE'S POWERFUL…"



starts shooting at eight or nine in the morning on the Monday, and by the time you get to Friday it's four o'clock in the morning. But yeah, it's a really nice crew.

Had you worked in Vancouver before?

I went on a long bike ride in Vancouver. I rode the Trans-Canada Trail, which is a trail that goes from the Atlantic to the Pacific across Canada, and I rode about 600 miles of that about two years ago and ended in Vancouver. Then before that I shot an episode of *Seven Days* up in Vancouver.

It's quite different to those desert locations of *24*, or fake-Chicago in *ER*...

Although, you know, all of the exteriors of *Supernatural* are supposed to be different places in America, and everywhere that Dean and Sam go seems to be green and mossy.

Speaking of traveling, you seem to have done quite a bit yourself. Is it true that you spent time at a monastery in Tibet?

I've done a fair amount of traveling and was at a monastery in Tibet for several months. I learned meditation and Buddhist philosophy along the way, and some Tibetan throat-singing. Which, when I'm warming up, sounds kind of like a goat slaughter, but once you get going, it's an amazing thing where you can produce multiple notes with your voice simultaneously so you're singing a chord.

Is there a lot of call for Tibetan throat-singing in your line of work?

You know, I haven't been called on to do it professionally yet, but I know that that call is *just* around the corner...

We also hear – and you're probably so fed up of talking about this, particularly since the recent presidential election – but you used to work as an intern at the White House...

I did, and I'm not fed up of talking about it!

Tell us some secrets about the White House that you haven't told any other journalist. We might not be able to print them, but we'll see...

[*Laughs*] A secret about the White House? Well, the most important piece of information I can share with you about the White House is that there is, in fact, a bowling alley there. I got to bowl in President Nixon's bowling shoes, so that's pretty much as cool as it gets!

That's amazing!

The White House is actually pretty well appointed; there's the Rose Garden out back, the bowling alley in the basement, and they've got the best movie screen there, too, that's just beautiful. Instead of having basic movie seats, each seat is a Barcalounger. It's really great!

So far the angels haven't been directly protecting the Winchesters much - Dean's almost been killed several times since Castiel showed up...

I think that the angels are going to get more involved. They obviously feel like the Winchesters can handle themselves; they've done pretty well for a long time.

Yes, they've survived four years so far. And the show's doing so well, isn't it? For a smaller network, ratings are going up...

Small network, and also unusual for that to happen in the fourth season of a show, so it's all good news.

Do you know yet if you'll be appearing in the rest of season four?

I'm gonna be around for the rest of the season, yes. You're the first interviewer that I've shared that with!

Do you think the Apocalypse will actually happen in the show?

I don't know where they're going to go with it, but from a dramatic standpoint it seems like they tend to go [in a] more dramatic [direction] in the show, and the Apocalypse is *very* dramatic. My money is on the Apocalypse!

"I GOT TO BOWL IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S BOWLING SHOES, SO THAT'S PRETTY MUCH AS COOL AS IT GETS!"

MISHA COLLINS
INTERVIEW

A WING AND A PR

D

AYER

From his very first appearance, Castiel – and the actor who plays him, MISHA COLLINS – have proven to be firm fan favorites, and with Castiel now a regular as of season five, that looks likely to continue. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* talked to Misha about Castiel's costume, downing beers on camera, and weird fan encounters...

Words: Jayne Nelson

Entrances on screen don't come much bigger than Castiel's in season four's *Lazarus Rising*, when the handsome angel unfolded his wings and brought with him a whole new mythology to the show. Actor Misha Collins' entrance into the world of *Supernatural* has been no less intense, with fandom going wild, and his quirky sense of humor proving a hit on Twitter and at *Supernatural* conventions worldwide.

Season five sees Collins now a show regular, and viewers are getting to watch Castiel evolve in other ways, from rebelling against his angelic masters to seeing him as a "love guru" in a potential future to him discovering more about earthly ways thanks to Dean. As Collins prepared to shoot Castiel's first scenes with Lucifer, we caught up with him to find out about his crazy time on *Supernatural* so far…

***The Official Supernatural Magazine:* A lot has happened over the past year since you joined *Supernatural*. How has it been for you so far?**

Misha Collins: It's a fantastic job to have, I'm very happy about it.

Do you feel you're part of the *Supernatural* family now?

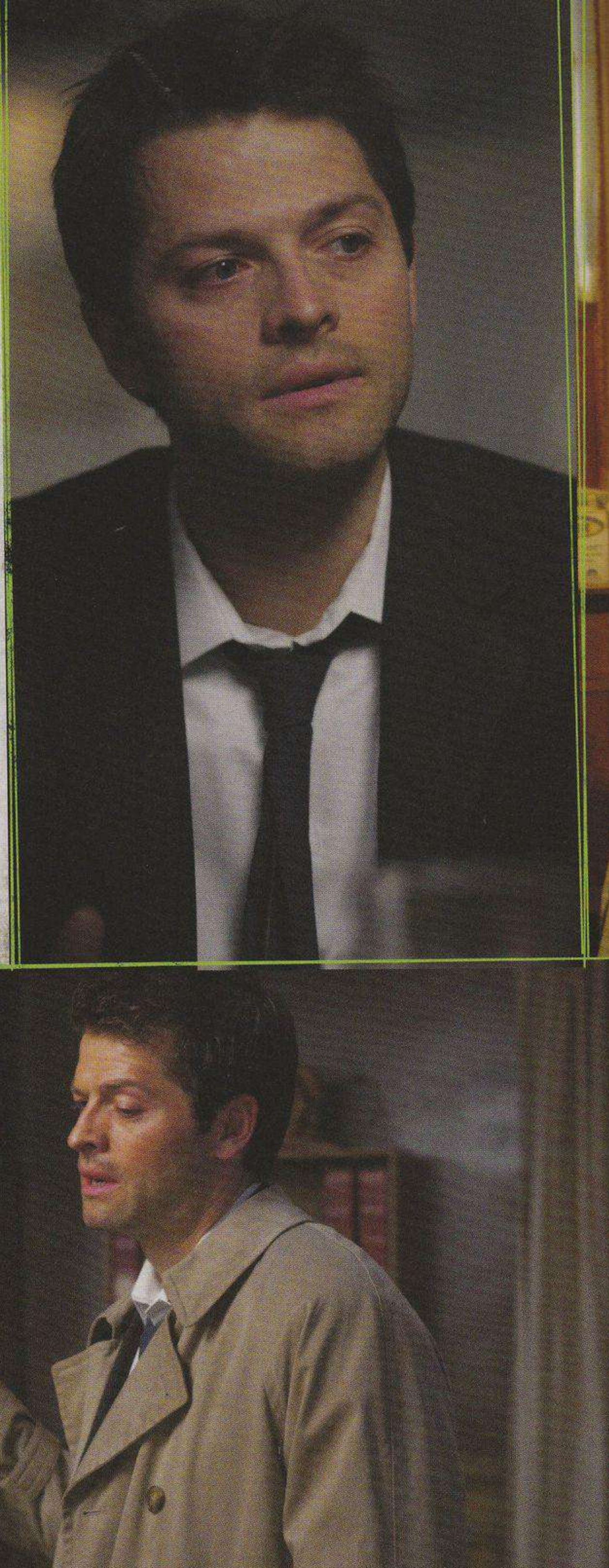
Yes, I feel like I'm a part of it. You know, it's a fairly dysfunctional family where everyone's working incredibly long hours and is often tired, but it's a great group of people to work with. I can say that without lying, which is really nice! Jared and Jensen set a good tone for the show; they work hard and are a lot of fun to work with. We have a second-unit day this season, which means basically each episode has a ninth day of shooting; last year we were shooting in eight days what we're shooting in nine days this year, and that makes a huge difference for the crew, because the hours are a lot more manageable. I think everyone is having a slightly more manageable experience!

Will Castiel go off on his own at any point, do you think?
I don't really know. We haven't done any episodes where Castiel is off on his own that much yet. There was a little bit of that at the end of season four, so I think the precedent has been set for that possibility. But we haven't really gotten into that so far this season. We're only nine episodes in, though.

Is it getting harder or easier to play him as you go along?
I think it's getting harder to play. I was expecting it to fall into place and for it to be a cakewalk, but the fact that Castiel's changing and becoming more human actually means that I have to keep on thinking about what I'm doing.

To date, most of Castiel's interaction has been with Dean. Do you think there will be any Sam and Castiel bonding coming up? After all, Sam's the one who always believed in angels.
I can't say that I've read that there's a lot of that just yet, but like I said, there's more to come. I imagine that at some point we definitely will see that, it seems like it would be too juicy a plot point to overlook, from a writer's perspective.

Have you had any scenes yet with Lucifer?
I have not. However, I will in the next episode [*Abandon All Hope*] that we shoot.



"I THINK THE OUTFIT DOES HELP ME WITH THE CHARACTER NOW, BECAUSE I JUST PUT IT ON AND AUTOMATICALLY CERTAIN THINGS HAPPEN TO MY BODY."

Do you think Castiel and Lucifer knew each other before Lucifer fell?
Definitely. I think they were old drinking buddies!

Can't you give us a hint? By the time this issue comes out, that episode will have aired...
We'd be speaking in the past tense, then. I should just tell you that I really enjoyed working with Mark Pellegrino, he's a great actor, and I think our scenes together were amazing. How about that? We haven't actually shot them yet, but... I actually worked with Mark on an independent movie years ago, but I had to remind him of the fact when I saw him on set because he'd forgotten. He was dead for much of the movie, which he did amazingly. And then he came to life [*laughs*]. He's a cool guy.

Maybe that's why he didn't remember you – he had his eyes closed because he was dead.
I remember he was in the trunk of a car and I had to poke at his fleshy bare ass for this one scene.

And he didn't remember you?
It was an odd vantage point to have on a fellow actor. Maybe it's old hat for him. It happens a lot!

Tell us about the brothel scene in *Free To Be You And Me*. Was that fun to shoot?
Every time there's a scene with a lot of half-naked women parading around the room, I feel like the scene goes smoothly. I don't know what it is; I honestly have no idea, but it always works better.

You may have been having fun, but Castiel looked terrified...
He was horrified [*laughs*].

How many times did you have to down the beer in that scene?
I had this moment of inspiration. The script said he was staring at his beer and I thought, "No, I'll down the beer!" So we shot five or six takes with the directors in another room looking at the monitors, and I downed the pint, and my stomach was starting to feel kind of bloated at that point. Then we changed camera angles and I heard the director laughing from the other room in front of the monitor. At the end of the take he said, "That was hilarious, the way you just drank that beer!" Apparently I had been sufficiently off-camera for the first five or six times that I had drunk the beer and it hadn't been captured on film at all. A complete waste! So the last couple were really tough. It wasn't real beer, it was non-alcoholic beer. All the calories and none of the fun!

In the very next episode, *The End*, you played a future Castiel who wasn't scared of women at all.
That was another room full of scantily clad women,

"JARED AND JENSEN SET A GOOD TONE FOR THE SHOW; THEY WORK HARD AND ARE A LOT OF FUN TO WORK WITH."

so it went well. It was fun to play that. I'm actually grateful that the writers have given me a couple of opportunities to play different things: Jimmy last year, where I was human, and then future Castiel. I feel pretty lucky.

How was it working with two Deans in *The End?* We can only imagine how hard Jensen worked on that episode.
That was a tough episode for him, because not only was he doing essentially eight-page scenes played against himself, he was also working against the person who was giving him his dialogue, his stuntman [Todd Scott], who's less accustomed to acting. It was really him imagining what he would do on the other side. It was quite a complex, convoluted house of mirrors for him to be operating in. He pulled it off, but he was definitely one frayed rope on that episode. I think his head was about to pop by the end.

What has happened to Jimmy, Castiel's vessel? Do you think he's still hanging around in Castiel's subconscious?
Well, I don't have final word on that, but I think he is. That's my take. He's still around. It's entirely possible that that's not true, however. I'm not the one who gets to decide these things in the end. Jimmy was a nice guy [*laughs*]. He really got screwed!

Castiel's outfit has kind of become his trademark, hasn't it? Will you be sick of wearing it by the time the show has ended?
I am sick of the suit! It's kind of perfect in that sense. It's almost a metaphor wrapped inside a metaphor. Oddly, I think the outfit does help me with the character now, because I just put it on and automatically certain things happen to my body. I immediately feel a little bit stiff. It has been indelibly printed on the character.

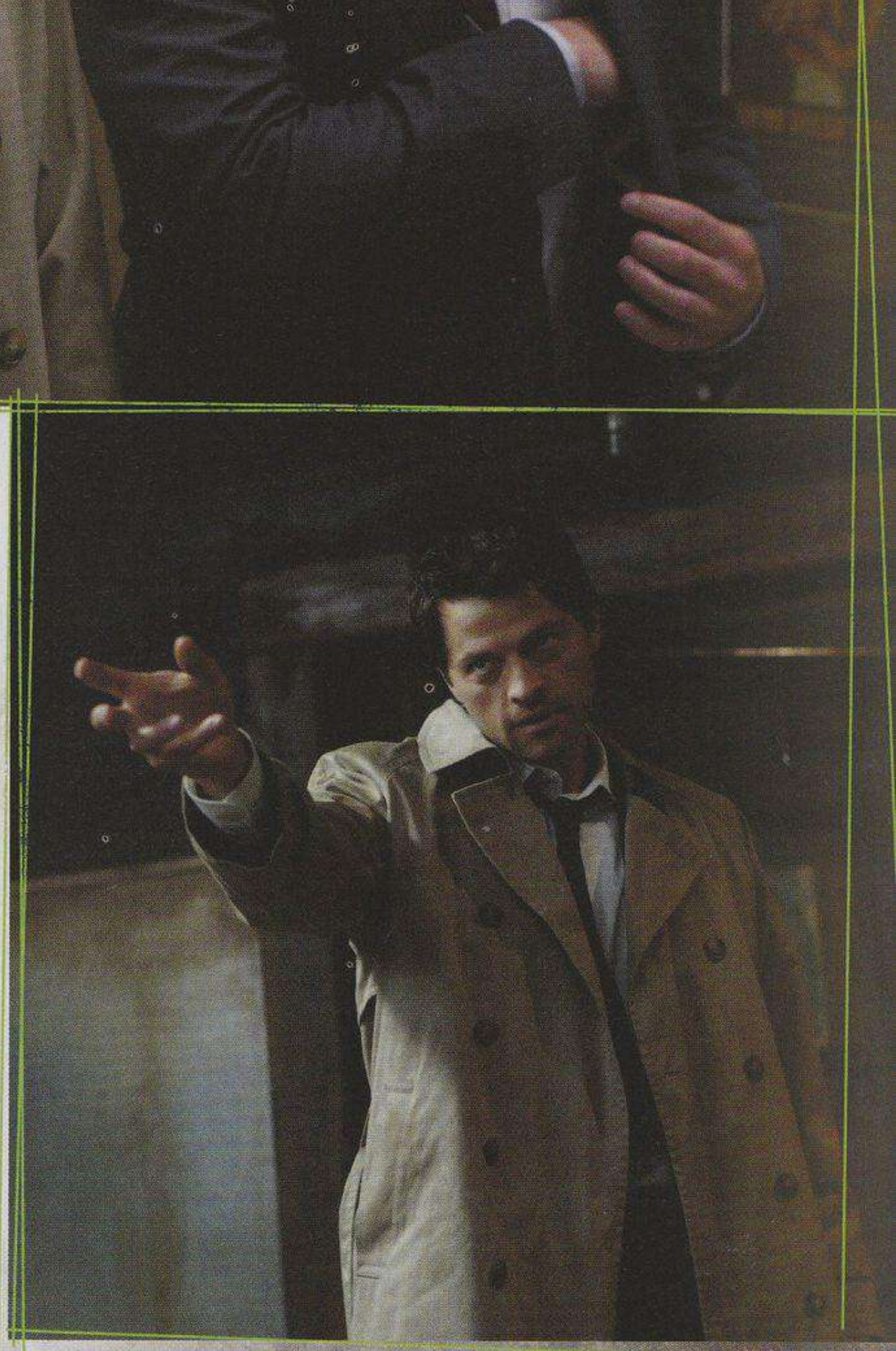
Some people have compared Castiel's look in the trenchcoat to Peter Falk's 1970s TV detective *Columbo*.
There's a movie by Wim Wenders called *Wings Of Desire*, and Peter Falk was in that. I think that Castiel was in part based on the character Bruno Ganz played in that movie, the angel named Cassiel…

"The angel of solitudes and tears." It's a great film.
It *is* a great film. If you notice in that, Cassiel was wearing an overcoat, and I think that the writers, in choosing that look, were partly drawing on that character from that movie. The parallels between *Wings Of Desire* and the fact that that

angel was named Cassiel – it's a little too much of a coincidence. Nobody's actually told me Castiel was based on that, but when I saw the movie I thought it was true.

You're very big on Twitter, aren't you? Having 26,600 followers is very impressive. Your Tweets are very funny...

Everything I write on Twitter is meant to be dead serious. Too bad that it comes across as funny. [*Laughs*] Oh well. It is kind of weird, you know? If I post something on Twitter I will immediately have 300, 400 responses, which is kind of surreal. Such a large volume of input from a large number of people all at once. A lot of it is "Oh Misha, you're so great, you're so funny," which is always kind of nice as a momentary ego boost – you can always write something not that funny and a bunch of people will write back, "You're so funny!" You can feel good about yourself for 10 minutes and then get on with your day. There have been a couple of times when I have logged on to Twitter and they're all, "Why don't you Tweet? What's wrong?" And I feel [*sighs*] "Oh, I should, they're making me feel guilty..." and then I think, "Wait a minute! I didn't sign any contract saying I was going to Tweet 'x' number of times per week! Nobody can hold me over the



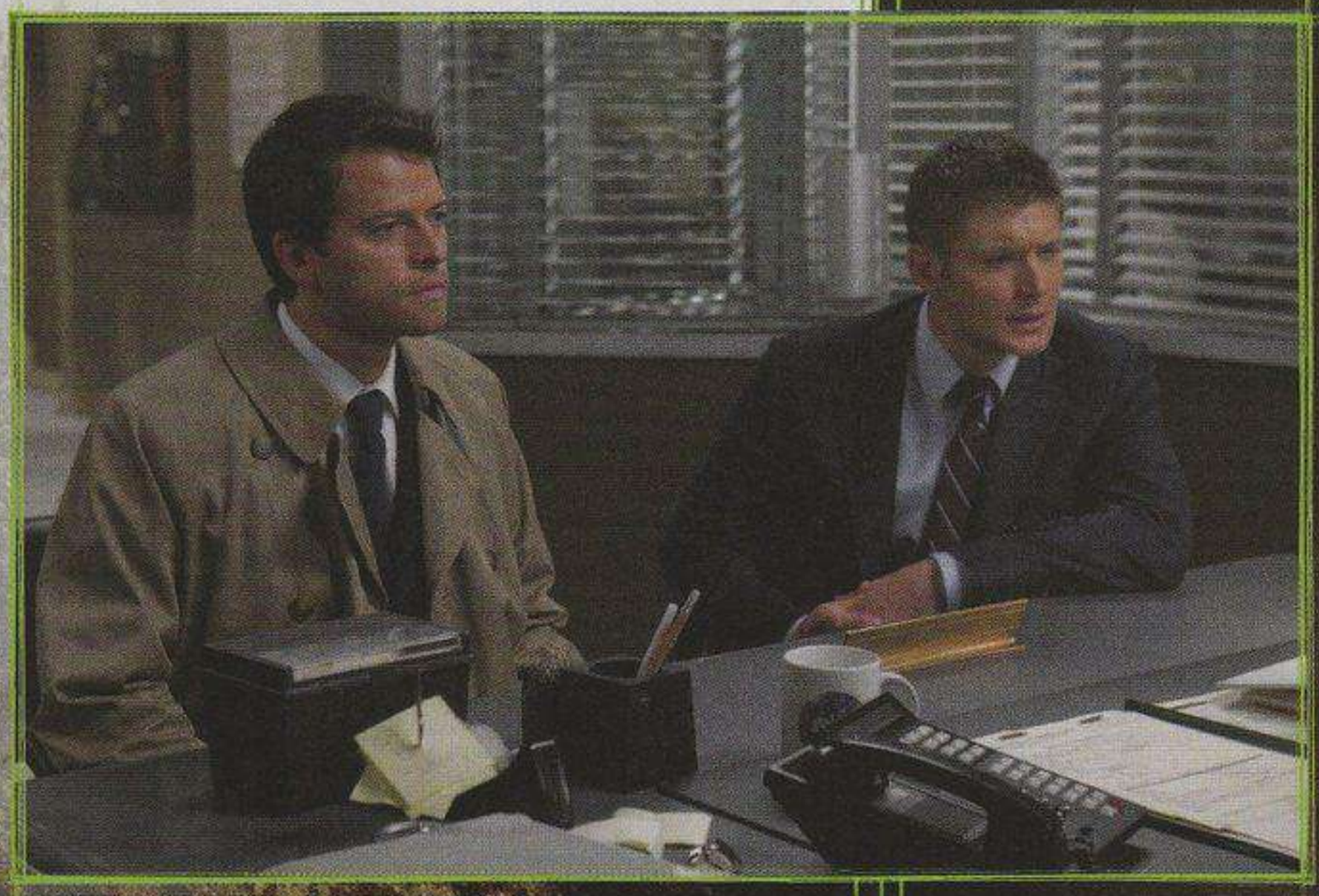
"THE BEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME THIS YEAR IS HAVING AN ACTION FIGURE MADE OF MY CHARACTER..."

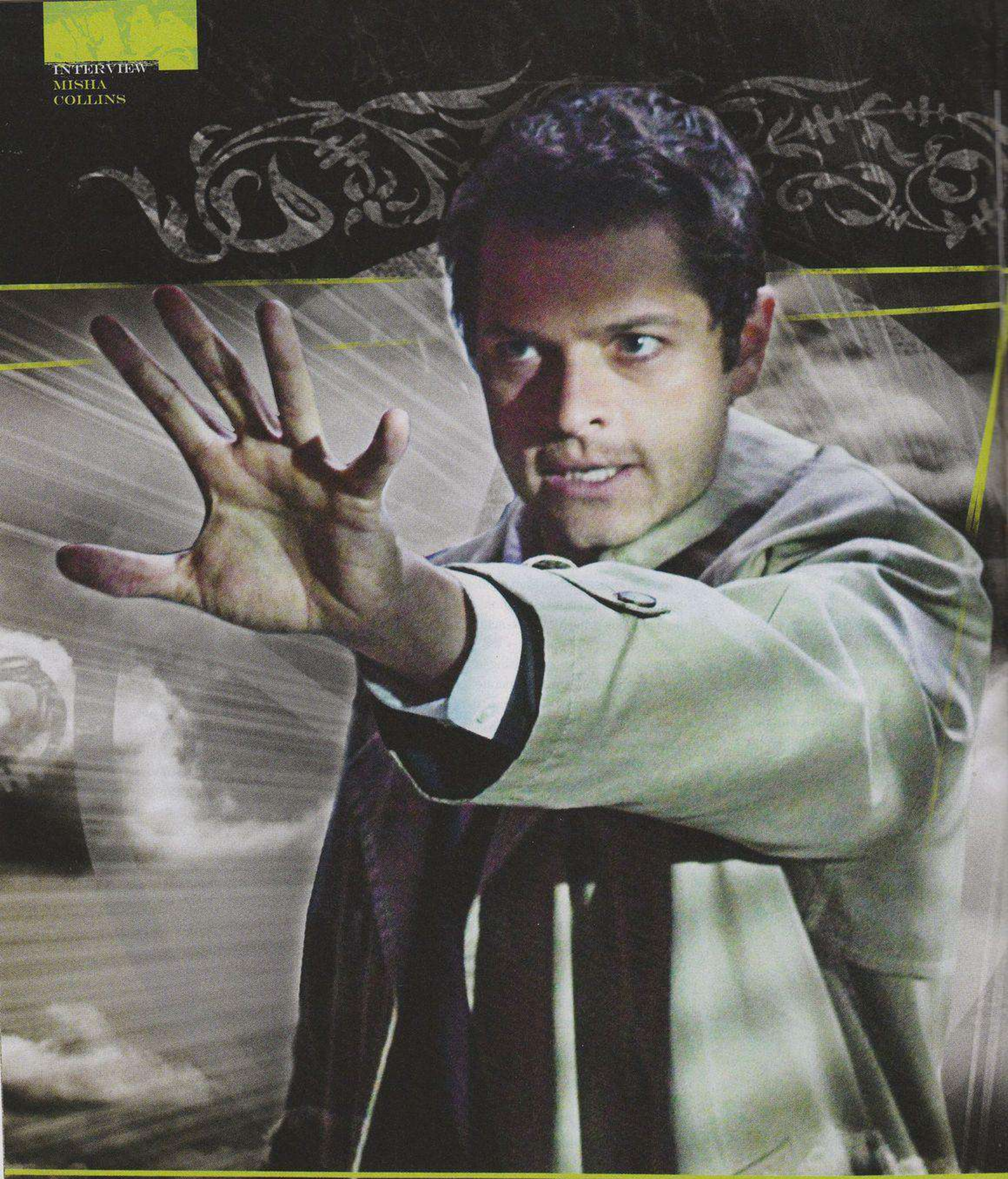
barrel for this! I'm a free man!" Then I'll feel guilty and think, "Oh, I'll just do one..."

Have you had any strange fan encounters yet?
Of course! There's some replies that are just long, rambling 15 different tweets from one person, one after the next, about how great our children are gonna look, things like that. And it's nice to hear, but at the same time, I dunno, I don't feel like Twitter's the best place to start a family!

Looking back over the last year, what do you think is the best thing that's happened to you because of this role?
The best thing that has happened to me this year is having an action figure made of my character [for *I Believe the Children Are The Future*]. That's definitely the best thing.

Were you allowed to take the action figure home and play with it?
No, I actually asked them if I could keep the action figure, and they said no. So ironically in the same fell swoop, it was the *best* and the *worst* thing that happened to me all year, because they wouldn't let me keep it!



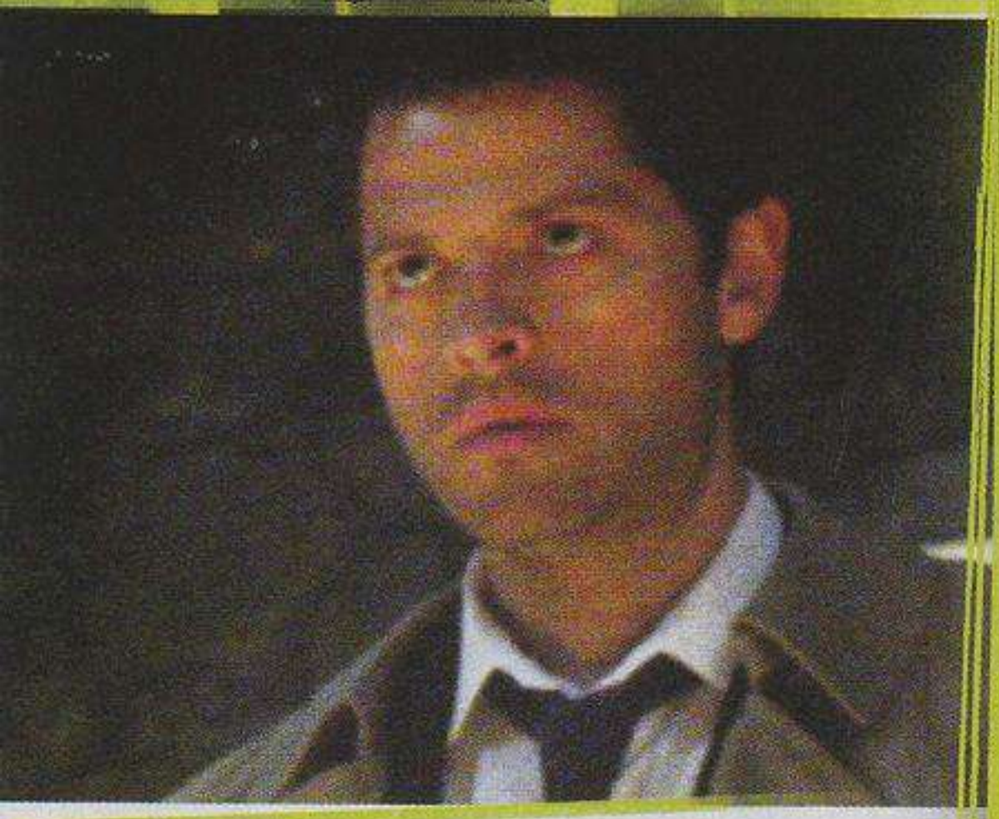


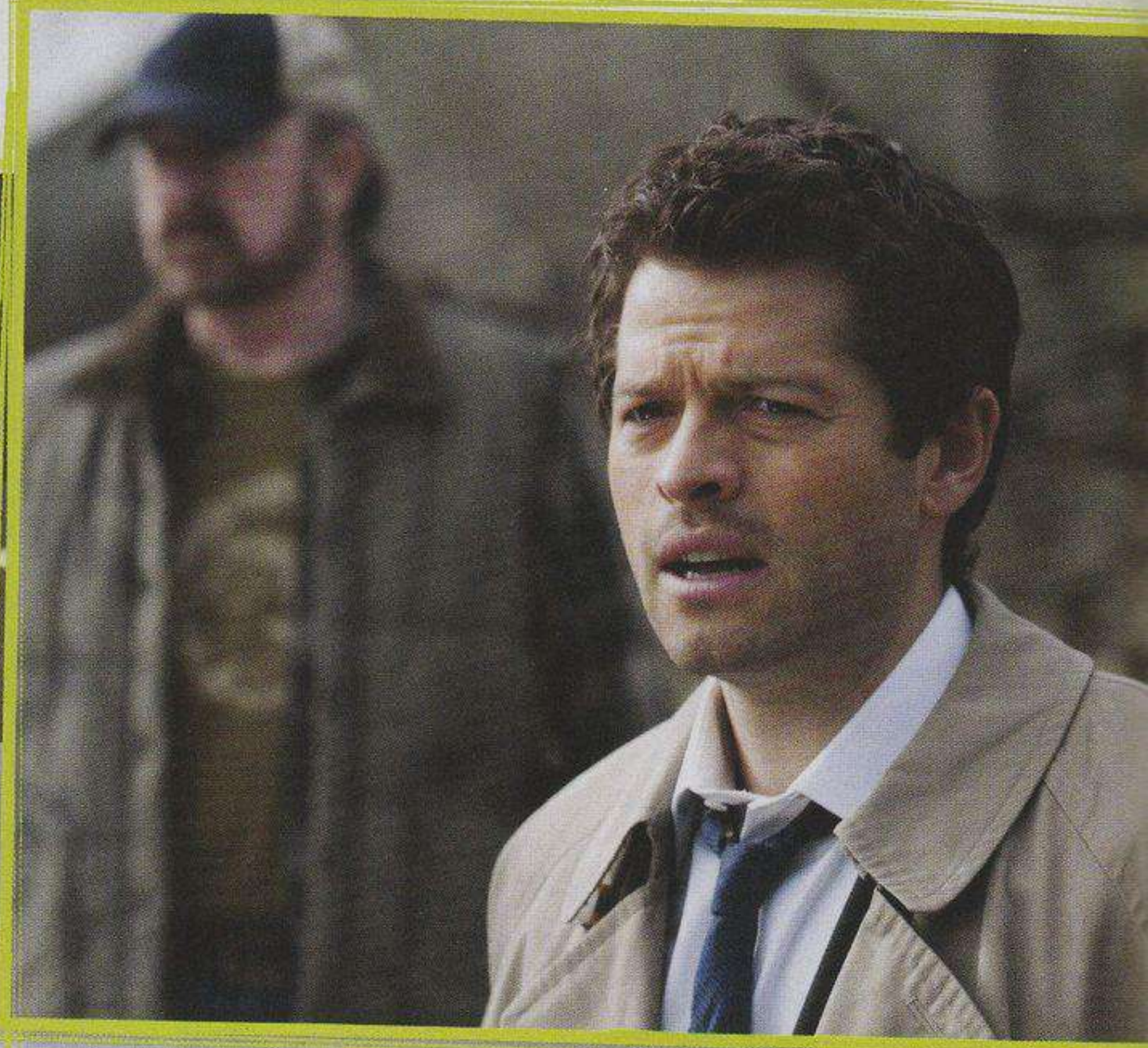
Words: Nicholas Knight

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

He's survived death by explosion twice, so it's safe to say Castiel is a tougher angel to kill than most. Fans wouldn't have it any other way of course, as Castiel's been a favorite since his first appearance. We caught up with actor Misha Collins to talk about his divine character...

Castiel started off season five dead, splattered all over Chuck's living room. Then, after being resurrected by God, he suffered ever-diminishing angel powers, insatiable hamburger cravings, and various other afflictions of the human condition. Then Lucifer popped him like a blood-filled balloon. To say he had a run of bad luck would be an understatement. But while Dean proved destiny is only a given if you give in to it, perhaps there is such a thing as karma, because Castiel certainly seems to have been rewarded for fighting the good fight. Not only was he resurrected again, but this time with full angel powers. He's so supercharged at the end of season five that it's safe to say anything's possible for him in season six. What role angels will play in the post-Apocalypse remains to be seen, but there's no doubt this fan favorite will return. Misha Collins discusses his character's highs and lows, and ponders what his newfound powers will lead to...





***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: What did you think of the way the Apocalypse developed?**

Misha Collins: I think from a storytelling standpoint, what's interesting is what they did on the show with these mythic characters like Satan and the archangels and that sort of thing, the way they grounded them in human dynamics. They're members of families. Satan is talking to his brother, the archangel Michael, so there are parallels between Sam and Dean. The family dynamic makes them not just abstract characters, but actually human-like characters that have qualities that we can relate to. It's like Satan and Michael are motivated by the same things that would motivate any sibling rivalry.

A lot of shows, especially shows that get into the supernatural realm, deal with really complicated mythology that becomes this top heavy albatross that they can't work their way out of, and it gets confusing for the audience. But *Supernatural*, instead of biting off more than it can chew, uses as its five-season arc this relationship between two brothers. It's a very simple, very easy to relate to dynamic that's the through-line of the show. Then you can have little detours like the Apocalypse.

Do you think there really is a supernatural realm with God, the Devil, and all that?

I believe that we live in a strange and mystical universe with a lot of unexplained and unexplainable phenomena going on in it. I'm not a follower of the literal letter of the Bible, but I think that there are a lot of mysterious things going on out there.

More specifically, do you believe angels exist for real?

I don't know if I believe in the sort of traditional representation of angels or the kind you see on *Supernatural*, but I think there are presences out there in the universe that are beyond an ordinary human being's powers or perception that are forces of benevolence. I'm open to that. I'm optimistic.

Assuming they are indeed benevolent, if one wanted to possess you as its vessel, would you let it?

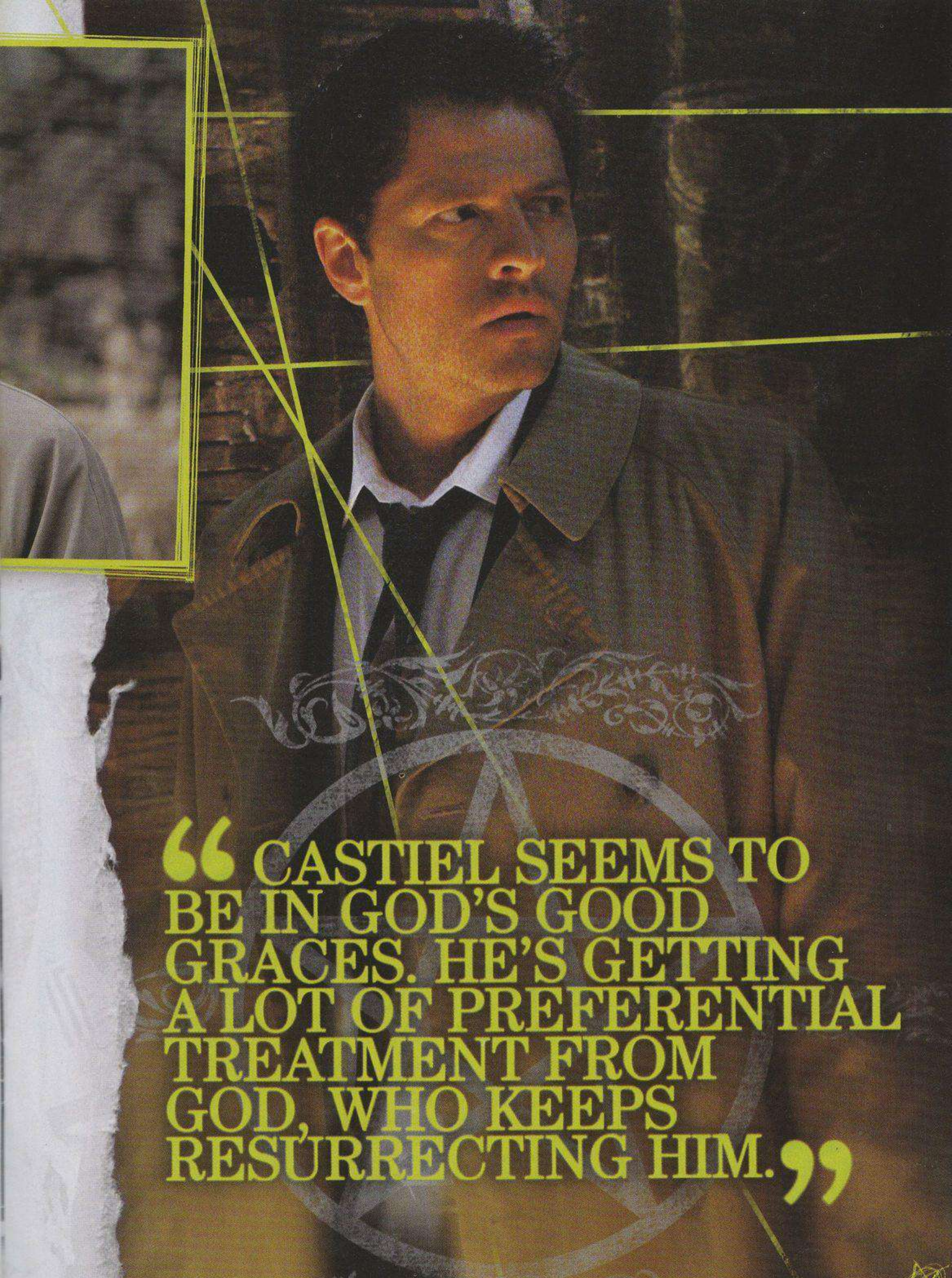
I don't know. It depends on what they're offering. I mean, if I was going to be given superhuman powers and got to retain my personality, then I'd go for it, but if I was just going to be a vehicle for someone else and give up my meatsuit, I would probably say no. Actually, I would *definitely* say no in that case, because it'd be sucky to be that; you're relegated to being just the voice in someone's head, which doesn't sound that great. I've got enough voices in my own head; I don't want to be a voice in someone else's head.

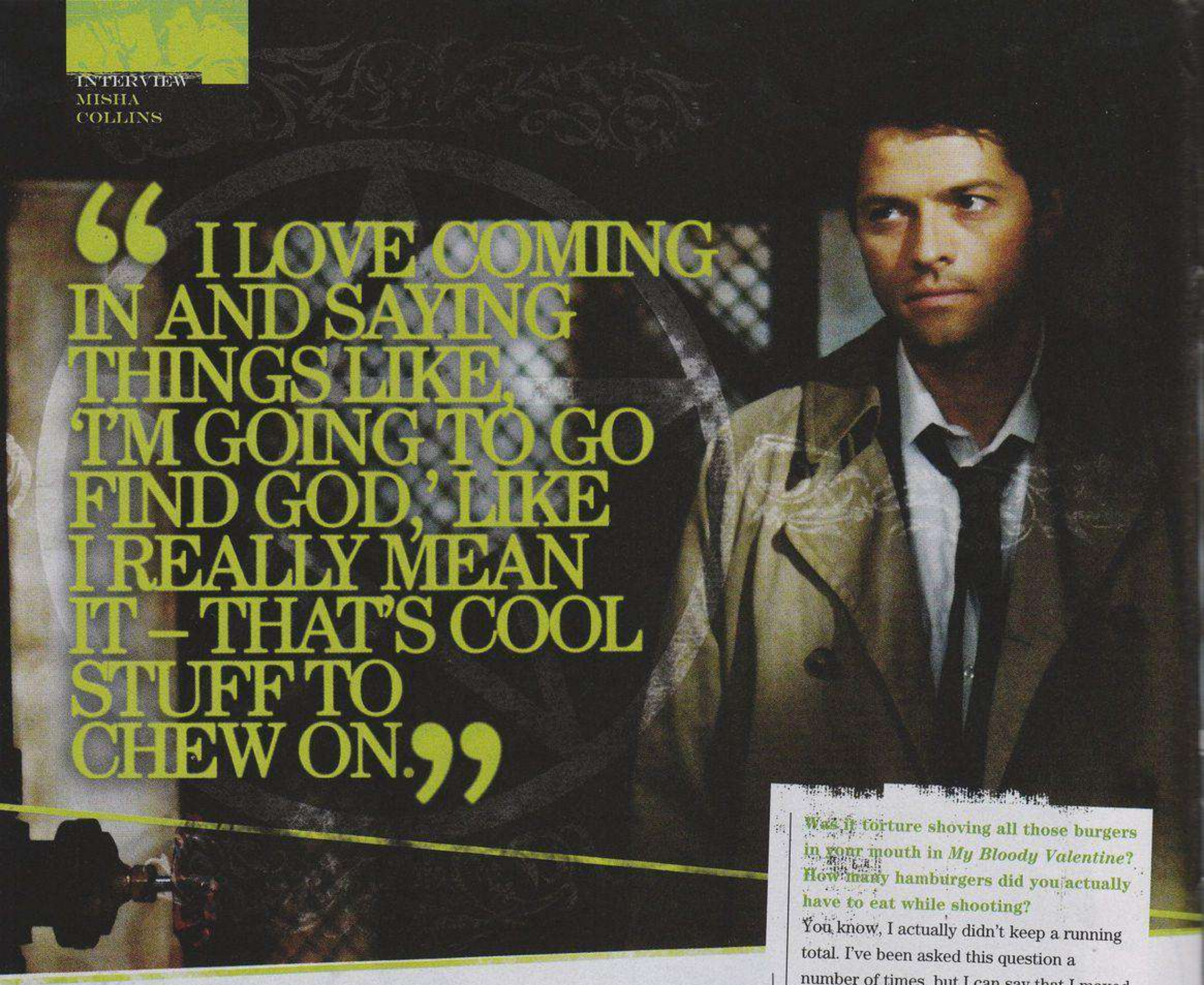
That does sound horrible – horrifying actually. Having worked on a horror show for two seasons, do you have any insight into why people around the world love to be scared?

I've often wondered that. I can't watch horror movies – I get scared. I went out with a bunch of friends during college to watch the movie *Seven* and I literally had to crawl between the rows of seats and cover my ears because it was just terrifying for me. When I was catching up on *Supernatural* to find out what happened before Castiel was introduced, I'd sit down in the evening and watch three or four episodes... and then have nightmares! Even now that I'm on it and have read the scripts, when I watch it, it still scares me. I've often reflected on this question, "Why do people like to be scared?" I think there's some primal adrenaline rush that you get from being frightened. It's exhilarating; it makes you feel alive.

Obviously a large number of *Supernatural* fans enjoy the scares that come with the show. What have your experiences with the fans been like – scary or otherwise?

Kind of amazing. I've never been on a sci-fi show before, and I've never had exposure to science-fiction fans. I had some


“CASTIEL SEEMS TO BE IN GOD’S GOOD GRACES. HE’S GETTING A LOT OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FROM GOD, WHO KEEPS RESURRECTING HIM.”



"I LOVE COMING IN AND SAYING THINGS LIKE, 'I'M GOING TO GO FIND GOD,' LIKE I REALLY MEAN IT – THAT'S COOL STUFF TO CHEW ON."

preconceived notions that they would be freakish and off-putting, but in general I've been amazed by how sweet and endearing and cool our fanbase is. Someone told me, and I don't know if it's true or not, but our show is the biggest in the world right now for television series having fan conventions.

Have you ever had any strange encounters with fans?

I've seen people with tattoos of my character's name on them. Things like that. It's a little weird.

Which would you say was your favorite episode of season five?

The stories are so varied that I would be hard-pressed to pick one that is really my favorite. There's just a lot of great stuff. I love coming in and saying things like, "I'm going to go find God," like I really mean it – that's cool stuff to chew on.

Oh, and I got to beat Dean up in *Point of No Return*. That was fun. Sort of just living out a personal fantasy on camera... [*Laughs*]

Speaking of *Point of No Return*, when Castiel carved that Enochian sigil into his chest, where did he go?

I'm not sure. I have a feeling that when angels are blasted away, they're blasted away to somewhere on the perimeter of Heaven, and then they have to find their way back to wherever they'd been.

Likewise, where did Gabriel stash Castiel in *Changing Channels*?

I saw him being tortured by angel goons somewhere in the ethereal realm. I didn't come up with something terribly creative, although I do remember we were bantering about all sorts of different ideas; various miserable torture techniques that Castiel was forced to endure.

Was it torture shoving all those burgers in your mouth in *My Bloody Valentine*? How many hamburgers did you actually have to eat while shooting?

You know, I actually didn't keep a running total. I've been asked this question a number of times, but I can say that I maxed out at about five in the first big eating scene that we did. That was pretty awful. After that I did my best to really dial it back and to figure out ways to make it look like I was eating more than I was. I'm definitely put off by uncooked vegetarian ground round about now, I can tell you that much!

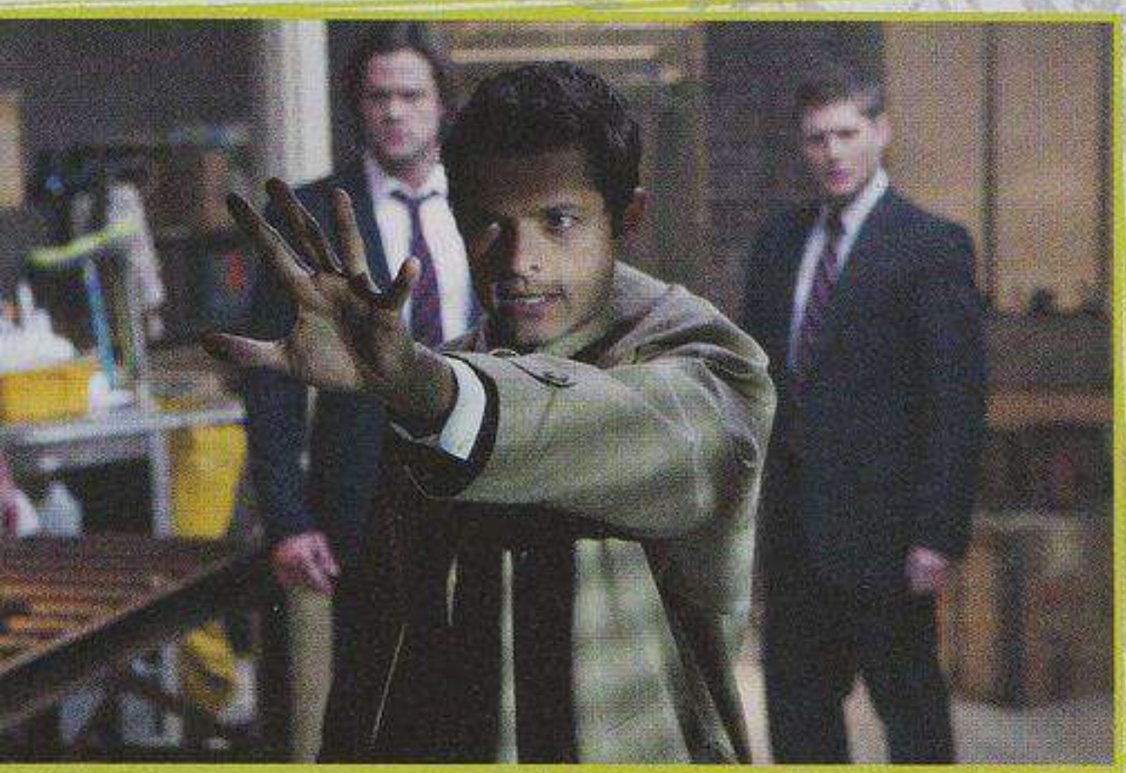
Another interesting thing we learned about Castiel in that episode is that he can read other angels' minds – at least the minds of lower orders of angels like cherubs, third class.

Yes, I can read minds! I did not previously know that. We keep on discovering new powers we never knew Cass had.

What did you think of Castiel losing all his powers in *Two Minutes to Midnight*?

I think that it's kinda nice. When I started, it was good to be an angel on *Supernatural*

INTERVIEW
MISHA
COLLINS



"WHEN I WAS CATCHING UP ON *SUPERNATURAL* TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE CASTIEL WAS INTRODUCED, I'D SIT DOWN IN THE EVENING AND WATCH THREE OR FOUR EPISODES... AND THEN HAVE NIGHTMARES!"

because I got to stand out a little bit – demons were a-dime-a-dozen. Now there've been so many angels on the show, it's kinda watered down too. The only way to stand out on *Supernatural* these days is to be a human. There don't seem to be that many of them anymore!

Well, then, did you enjoy essentially playing a human hunter in that episode?

I did! There's something about that that's interesting; it's like Castiel's actually vulnerable in a way that he hasn't been before, which ironically makes him a little bit more badass, because when you're no longer virtually immortal, when you do something risky, it's actually *risky*. That was cool.

Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles are well known for enjoying the action scenes, getting physical, and doing as many of their own stunts as possible. Are you the same way?

Honestly, that is not true for me. Because it gets so technical, you're not actually fighting. You're pretending to fight, and you're calibrating by inches just to accommodate a camera angle.

Along with their athleticism and enjoyment of stunts, the boys are of course also known for their pranks. Have they pulled any on you lately? Or vice versa?

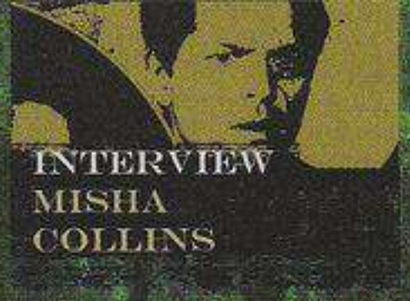
I'm the one who gets pranked more often than not, and more often than not the pranks are just things like Jared grabbing my ass below camera frame, during my close-up. I have to make that split-second decision: Do I ruin the take? Just step out of the scene and be like, "Uh, I can't work with this..." Or do I plow through and do a bad take that ends up in the episode? Which is what I usually choose.

What are your predictions for Castiel's involvement in season six?

I have no idea. He's heading back to Heaven to try to clean up the mess there. There's a lot of clean up that you have to do after the Apocalypse [in Heaven and on Earth]. That's a whole season right there: damage control. And Castiel seems to be in God's good graces. He's getting a lot of preferential treatment from God, who keeps resurrecting him, so I wonder if all that power's going to go to his head?

Do you have any other highlights of your time on the show so far that you'd like to share?

On the last night of shooting [season five] for me, Jared, Jensen, and I were having a beer in Jensen's trailer and just reflecting on what a great crew and cast we have on *Supernatural*. It really does have a family feeling, and everyone who's there is really happy to be working in that environment with those people. That's a pretty rare thing to have. I can honestly say that I feel pretty lucky to be a part of the show.

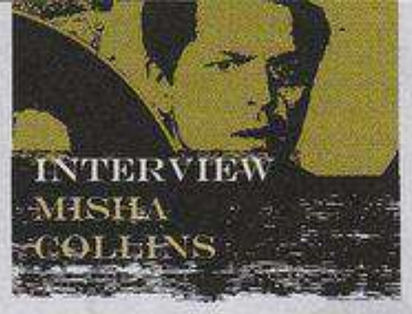


INTERVIEW
MISHA
COLLINS

Stairway To Heaven

As season six continues, Castiel has his hands full dealing with a civil war in Heaven and helping Dean find out what happened to Sam's soul. For actor Misha Collins things have been no less hectic, as he's now juggling fatherhood with playing Sam and Dean's angelic ally. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* caught up with Misha to find out more...

Words: Nicholas Knight



Last time we spoke with Misha Collins, he'd just wrapped up season five and was unsure what a post-Apocalyptic season six had in store for his character, the rebellious angel Castiel. Now, he's battling the archangel Raphael's followers in Heaven and battling dirty diapers and sleepless nights at home...

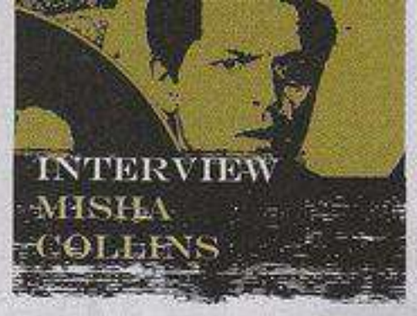
***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: At the last Vancouver *Supernatural* convention [covered elsewhere in this issue], you discovered you'd worn your jacket inside-out during the photo ops and then for part of your time onstage. Has Jared or Jensen or anyone else teased you about that?**

Misha Collins: To be perfectly honest with you, I think I give my coworkers *lots* of material to make fun of me with. But the next day that I shot after the con, I came to my trailer and every article of my wardrobe was hung inside out... and I didn't know why! I thought, "This is a terrible mistake that the wardrobe department has made – can't they see that everything is inside out?" And then I figured out why they'd done it! [*Laughs*]

Have there been any other pranks between you guys since then?

It's been a surprisingly peaceful and quiet time on the *Supernatural* set. It's like we have an armistice. And it's been kind of nice not fearing for my physical wellbeing at any given point. Although... I have concocted a *great* thing to do to Jared. But it's pointless to talk about it in advance. All I can say is that I'm excited about what I'm going to do, and I'm also fearful about what he's going to do in retaliation. I started a small prank war

“CASTIEL IS SIDETRACKED A LITTLE BIT FROM SAM AND DEAN’S STRUGGLE, BECAUSE HEAVEN ITSELF IS EMBROILED IN A CIVIL WAR.”



with Jared involving our cars, and it quickly got to the point where he said to someone, "You know what? I should just total his car. I can afford that." When you're dealing with an opponent who has that kind of mentality, it's a bit scary!

Speaking of scary costars, we heard you had an interesting encounter with Mark Pellegrino when you were working on *Moving Alan* together.

Mark and I shared a honey wagon – it's a trailer where five actors have tiny little bathroom stall-sized rooms – and we were next to one another. He was doing this vocal warm-up in his, and it really freaked me out. I was thinking, "What the hell is going on?" [While I was hearing] "*Hunh! Hunh!*" He was really getting into the vocal warm-up stuff, but because I'd never heard anything like that, I thought somebody was getting beaten up! Then I was like, "Wait a minute... No, no, that's somebody doing vocal warm-ups." But that was like ten years ago; he wasn't doing any of that to my knowledge when he was working on *Supernatural*.

You probably won't get to work with Pellegrino's Lucifer again on *Supernatural*, but there've been lots of other great characters and monsters so far this season. What do you think of season six so far?

It's been a little disconcerting [for the characters]. I think that we don't quite know what's going on [in Heaven or on Earth]. Things on the surface appear to perhaps have gone back to a more normal routine in the *Supernatural* universe, but everything's a little heightened. Monster activity is up, and the monsters seem to be a bit more fearless and bigger and badder than they ever were before. This show has gotten back a little bit to its season one roots, where it's Sam and Dean doing a lot of monster hunting and a little bit less of the bigger angel-demon mythology storylines going on. But as the season unfolds, we're going to see that the bigger

"THE MOST EMBARRASSING GUILTY PLEASURE THAT I WOULD CONFESS TO IS PLAYING SCRABBLE WITH JARED."

mythology actually does tie in with this heightened monster activity. Things are not as they seem in the *Supernatural* universe...

What else should I tell you about season six so far? Castiel is sidetracked a little bit from Sam and Dean's struggle, because Heaven itself is embroiled in a civil war, which has pitted Raphael's camp against Castiel's camp, and he's doing everything he can to hold things together up there. So Sam and Dean's trivial little problems of not having souls and being turned into vampires and that kind of thing pale in comparison to Castiel's troubles.

Are disappointed that Castiel hasn't been more prominent in season six so far?

Well, Cass' role is going to figure prominently in the mythology of the season overall. He's lighter in the first half of the season than he's going to be in the second half. But to be perfectly honest with you, no, I'm not disappointed because I just had a son and it's really nice to be able to be with him rather than being with Sam and Dean for this small period of time. So I'm actually savoring the time off.

Has your son been with you in Vancouver?

Yeah. In fact, he is a Canadian. He was born in our apartment here in Vancouver, so he's a dual citizen. His name is West Anaximander Collins.

What's been your favorite Castiel scene so far in season six?

I definitely have a favorite episode – *The Third Man* was a lot of fun to do. I didn't actually perform the stunt, but I loved watching the stunt of my stuntman jumping out the fourth floor window. He acted totally unfazed by it.

Do you do most of your other stunts? Like, the knife fighting?

I do all of my own disappearing. And I do my own exploding. I have done the knife fight stuff so far, and I've done more training stuff on *Supernatural* than I've done on anything else in terms of martial arts stuff. When I've had substantial knife fight scenes, I've done a fair amount of preparation to make it look as natural as possible. In my normal life as Misha, I rarely stab anyone, so that's taken a little bit of work getting into.

Was it a stunt double that rolled down the stairs in *The Third Man*?

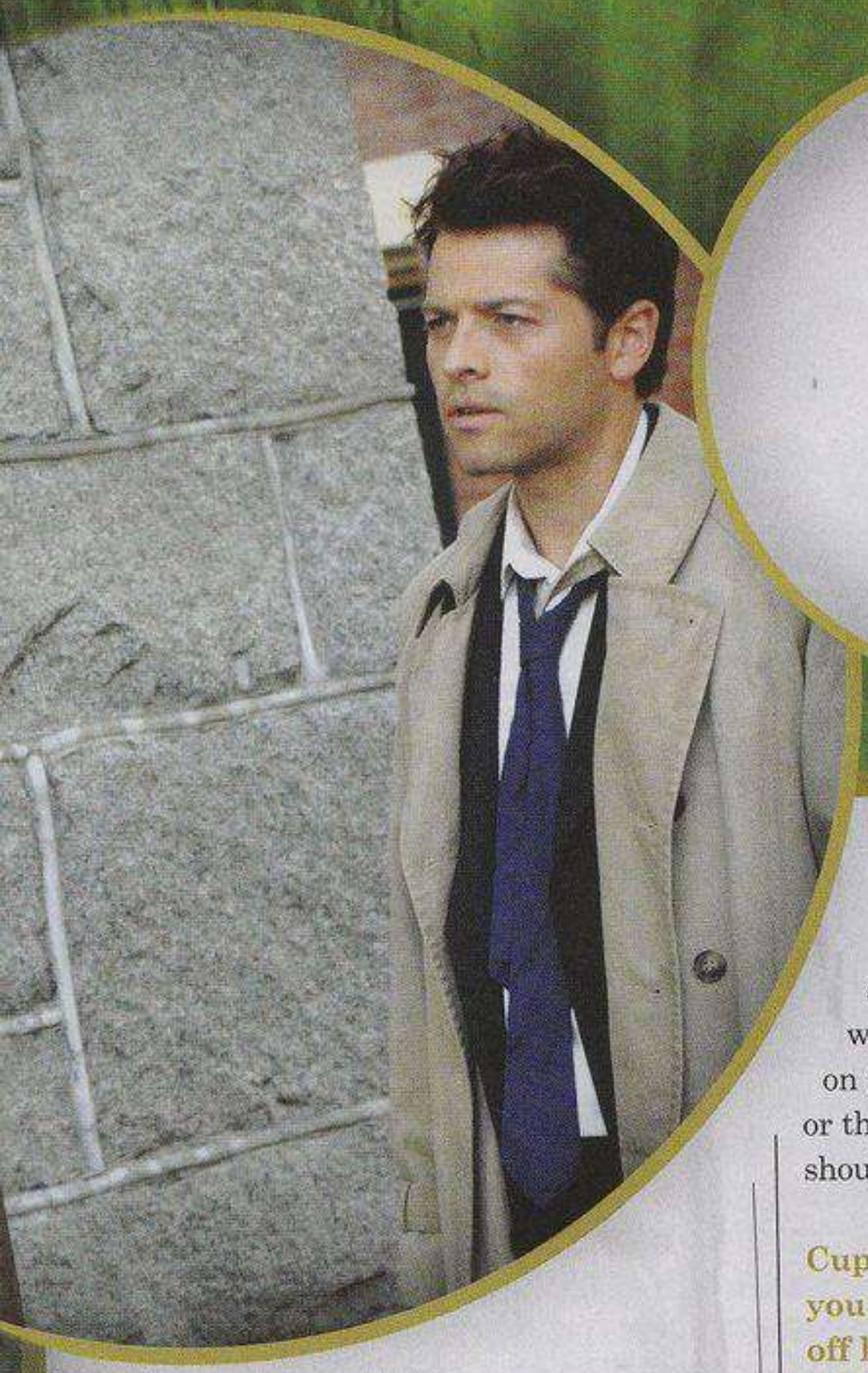
I didn't do all of the stair rolling, but I did one full somersault on the stairs.

Did Jensen and Jared offer to help push you down the stairs?
Yes, they did. I guess you can just infer that from our dynamic. Yeah, they were very helpful in that respect!

In *You Can't Handle the Truth*, Veritas makes people tell the truth. If you were forced to tell the truth about what it's really like to work with Jared and Jensen, what would you say?
I would say it's like adult circumcision. Every day. With no anesthesia. [*Laughs*]

And if you were forced to tell the truth about what your most embarrassing guilty pleasure is, what would it be?
Why would I tell you that? I mean, truly, I'm not going to tell you that! It's a great question, so I guess I could rephrase it for you. The most embarrassing guilty pleasure that I would confess to is playing Scrabble with Jared. This is humiliating, and this is taking me down several pegs, but he usually beats me.

He knows more big words?
No, he doesn't know the words – that's what drives me up the wall! He knows that certain combinations of letters are a word, but he doesn't know the definition of the word. It's really frustrating. For example, yesterday, he used the word *fanion*, and it is a word. It's a small flag that a surveyor uses. He didn't know that. He didn't know



what it meant, but he used it on the Scrabble board.

What's been happening behind-the-scenes at the moment?

I don't have anything for you [there]. You know what I'm suffering from right now? Baby brain. I did an interview a few days ago and I noted, "Jeez, I used to feel like I was fluid and somewhat funny in these things and now I'm just exhausted." I think that getting one-and-a-half hours of sleep at a stretch does a number on your interview skills.

Perfectly understandable! Here's a relatively easy question: What's your favorite scene that you've ever done on *Supernatural*?

I don't know why, but what pops into my head is telling Jared – or Sam, as you like to call him – not to ask stupid questions, right after I drunk that liquor store [in *99 Reasons*]. That was a fun scene to do. The whorehouse scene [in *Free To Be You and Me*] was fun, too. There's been a lot. It's hard to say, because probably the most fun I've had on set has been some of the antics behind-the-scenes, like with the naked Cupid. That was a very difficult scene to shoot. There was a lot of laughing behind-the-scenes on that one¡ It was a very long shoot or that scene; much longer than it should've been.

Cupid didn't wear any clothes. Do you ever wish Castiel would take off his clothes? Now that you're one of the head honchos in Heaven, don't you think your vessel deserves a new outfit?

Yeah, it would be nice. Like, even if they were to put Cass in a nice sundress. You know, something more flattering to his figure. That would be nice. It would be nice to get him in something a little sexier... But, I don't know, I've actually totally given up hope. In the beginning I thought for sure they'd have the cool John Hughes makeover scene where Cass is suddenly hip and with it. But now I don't think that's ever gonna happen.

Now that Castiel is spending so much time in Heaven, do you think he'll ever cross paths with psychic Pamela, who's taken up residence there? If so, what will he say to her? "Hey, sorry about burning your eyes out – my bad."

Yeah, yeah, I think a simple apology will do. But, hey, she has her sight in Heaven, though! So really, the Lord taketh away and the Lord giveth back is the message there.

From burning people's eyes out to reading cherubs' minds, it seems like we're always discovering new Castiel powers. What do you think of Castiel's ability to shove his hand inside people to read their souls?

Pretty gross, huh? It had quite an effect on that little kid [in *The Third Man*] when I shoved my hand into his chest. It was a little weird. It just looked really creepy in person. I would've thought if a soul was in a person, that you could tell by the glint in their eye or something. Evidently not. You have to put your fist into their chest and run your fingers over their pulsing heart!

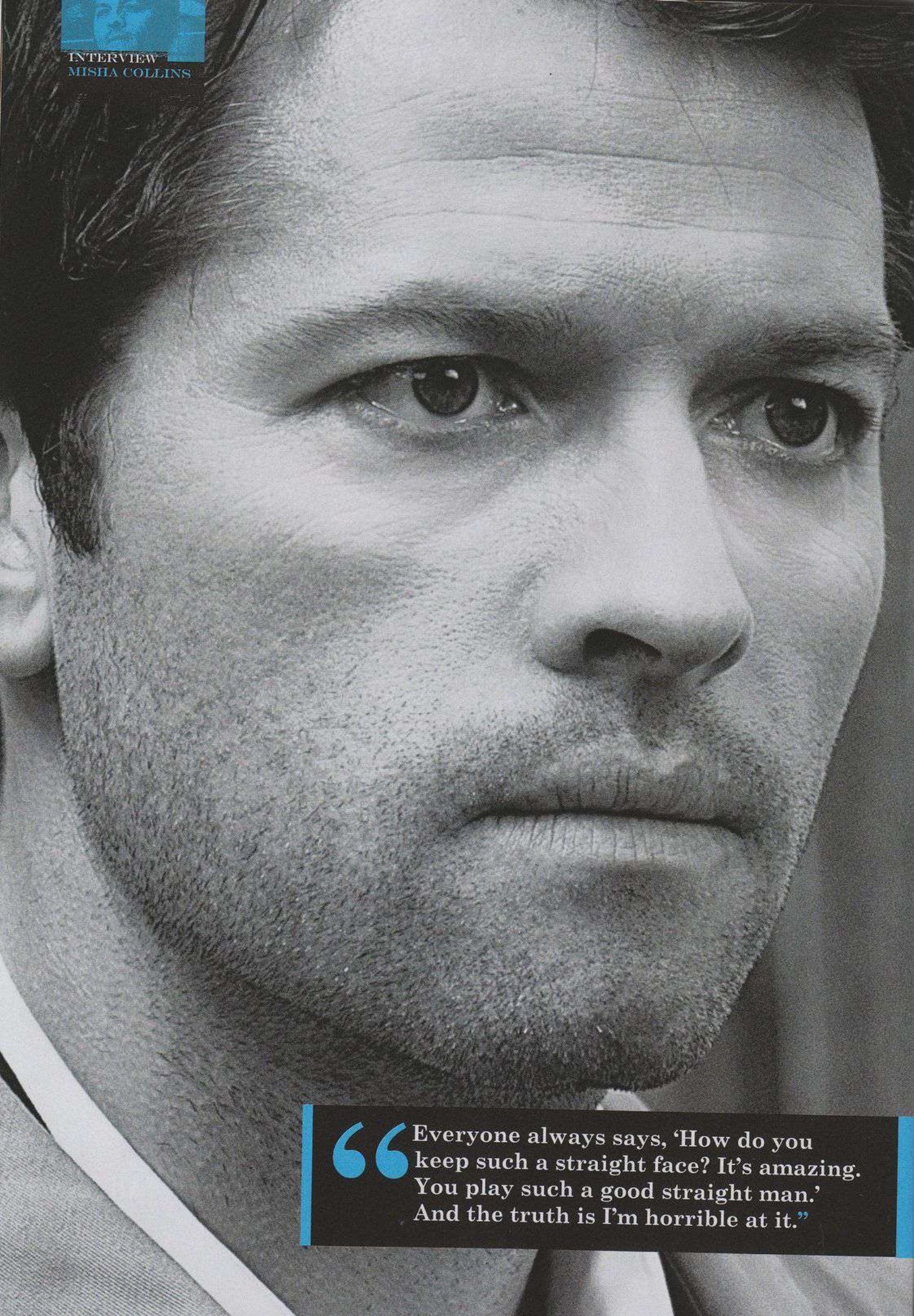
Castiel swooped in like a superhero in *Caged Heat*...

Yeah, I don't want to pat myself on the back too much, but *Cass killed Crowley*. So a big chapter is over. Or appears to be over...

How has working on season six been so far?

The season has been going great. I have not been there nearly as much as Jared and Jensen. Jensen has been there pretty much every day [as he's been directing as well as acting].

One thing that I can say about working on *Supernatural* that's from the heart is that I love the cast and crew. We have such a great time working together. It's just a great place to go to work. And that's not something I can say about most of the sets I've been on. I've enjoyed artistically doing some of the projects I've done in the past, and some have been good places to work, but *Supernatural* is a *great* place. I feel lucky to be a part of the show. And I'm going to leave you with that corny little nugget...



> “Everyone always says, ‘How do you keep such a straight face? It’s amazing. You play such a good straight man.’ And the truth is I’m horrible at it.”

Words by: Nicholas Knight

PARADISE LOST

Castiel has had quite a journey on *Supernatural*, from the awkward angel who saved Dean from perdition to the power-crazed being who set himself up as the new God. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* caught up with actor Misha Collins to talk about Castiel's evolution...

Good guy? Bad guy? Ally? Enemy? How do we classify Castiel now? He did stop Raphael from rekindling Armageddon, so if the ends justify the means, then he's still a good guy, right? So what if he holds enough power to kill the Winchesters with the snap of a finger? He wouldn't do that... Would he? We certainly hope not. But we can't say for sure. Neither can Misha Collins, but he did share his views on his character's dramatic story arc...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Obviously the big thing since we last spoke with you is Castiel's dealings with Crowley and all that came of that, so were you surprised by Castiel's corruption?**

Misha Collins: Yes and no. I think that it was an easily justifiable corruption in the end; it was kind of treading one of those dubious lines in justifying the means. It seems like most of the characters on *Supernatural* have gone down a similar, if ultimately less consequential, road at some point in their arc. So I think that in and of itself wasn't quite so shocking. I think that how it ultimately ends up playing out is more surprising.

It was a great twist when Castiel became the new God, so to speak. Since he was no longer an angel, did you make any changes to how you carried yourself or to your voice?

A couple of subtle things. He [now] has a very thick East Indian accent, walks with a limp, carries himself hunched over, and has an afro, so there are some subtle character changes, but I think they work.

Hmm. Maybe that's in the director's cut or something. But for the version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* that actually aired...?

Very stereotypical God stuff. I don't know how broad the changes read, but there's a difference.

Regardless of the voice used, the face is yours, and you make Castiel's lines memorable with the deadpan looks you give while delivering humorous lines.

Everyone always says, "How do you keep such a straight face? It's amazing. You play such a good straight man." And the truth is I'm horrible at it. I blow it so often. The ones that they end up airing are the few

Castiel prepares to ascend to godhood

Cont.

takes where I manage to not crack a smile. I can't tell you how many takes I ruin just by breaking out laughing over and over and over again. And it doesn't help that Jared is often somehow grabbing me right below frame and trying to get me to laugh. It's funny when he gets me, but he gets me all the time. So I'm not good at keeping a straight face. I actually use really simple tricks like biting my cheeks and things like that, so a lot of the time when you see me on camera keeping a very stern and solid glare, it's because I'm biting my cheek particularly firmly.

Of the season six takes that aired, do you have a favorite line of dialogue?

I suppose, "I'm your new God," will stick with me for a while, it's sort of a nice one-two punch.

Another nice one-two punch was having Ben Edlund both write and direct a Cass-centric episode, *The Man Who Would Be King*. What was it like working with Edlund?

One thing that's a lot of fun in having someone like Ben directing is that you have a director who knows the whole arc, the characters, the connections, and can really talk to you about what's going on with your character. A lot of the directors are more like guest stars. There are several directors that we have who really know the story well, but a lot aren't as well-versed, so it's nice to have that perspective.

When we spoke with you halfway through season six, you mentioned that *The Third Man* was your favorite season six episode so far. Regarding that episode, what's your perspective on why Castiel didn't hesitate to torture the boy, Aaron Birch? Would you say it was an easy decision for him to make?

I think that it was an easy decision to make because I think that he believes that the means justify the ends. The ends being to win the war in Heaven. Ultimately he's fighting not only because he wants to preserve the peace in Heaven but also because if the Apocalypse is brought back, humanity will be destroyed. He's not only fighting to preserve Heaven, but also to preserve humanity. So torturing or causing some pain to this kid didn't seem like such a big deal to him, which frankly I think is sound reasoning. Also, if you can take into consideration that this kid had just killed three men, he wasn't exactly a little angel himself. That was a fun episode to shoot.

As fun as that one was, now that you've finished the rest of the season, do you have a new season six favorite? Either from the standpoint of working on it, or from watching the final cut?

The French Mistake takes both of those trophies home. I liked working on it and I loved the final product. I watched it twice, which I don't do normally. It was very good. But I haven't managed to get my wife to watch it once. My wife falls asleep! We have an infant son and she falls asleep the minute we start watching anything because we're so tired. As someone who works in television. I feel like it is my professional responsibility to keep abreast of what's on television, but not only have I not kept abreast in the last year, I don't think I could name five shows that are on TV right now. I'm that far out of the loop.

In *The French Mistake*, what was it like playing a version of yourself?

It was ****ing great!

> **"The best part about playing this character is the teleporting, the mind-reading, the time-traveling, and the social awkwardness."**

Alterna-Misha loved to "tweet" whenever the mood struck. You have quite the following on Twitter, so would you say in that sense you're the same as the TV Misha?

The Misha Twitterer on *Supernatural* was more of the quintessential douchebag actor Twitterer than I like to think of myself as. I don't really go for the celebrity Twitterer who likes to impart his daily beverage choice at Starbucks to his followers. That to me is a revolting modern phenomenon and one I try to satirize as much as I can.

To what do you attribute your huge following on Twitter, then?

I think my character was immediately – to everyone's surprise – quite popular with the fanbase. I'd never had a fan club before being on *Supernatural* and now I have a hundred and something thousand followers on Twitter and things that I never would have imagined. And I think that there's a lot of different factors as to why that would have happened. I think one reason is that it's actually a cool character and he can do all this cool stuff. And probably a major other additional contributing factor is that he was introduced to the show by pulling one of the show's heroes, Dean, from Hell. When you save one of the leads of the show, it immediately ingratiates you to the fanbase. So that helped.

We can think of many reasons why you and your character are still on the show, but we want to hear more of what you think!

When Castiel was introduced to the show in the first episode of season four [*Lazarus Rising*], he was originally intended to be a more minor character, but Castiel introduced the entire mythology of angels and Heaven, and that, I think, evolved into being a much bigger storyline than the writers initially thought, so my character endures. And Castiel has had a very interesting arc over the course of the last three years. He started as this sort of warrior of God who was fighting the righteous fight and doing God's bidding. And then he became disillusioned, and he became over the course of seasons four and five more human, and then more angelic again, and then was ultimately reconstituted by God after being blown to smithereens. And in season six Castiel is faced with what amounts to civil war and anarchy in Heaven. He's trying to avert the world falling back into an Apocalypse and is basically leading one of two opposing armies in Heaven. That's taken him on his own journey. It's a lot to go through.

It sure is! From an acting standpoint, what's been the best part about playing the character Castiel?

Well, the best part about playing this character is the teleporting, the mind-reading, the time-traveling, and the social awkwardness. It's nice to play a character who discovers pornography for the first time. It's fun playing Castiel. It's an interesting exploration of discovering what it's like to be human and what it's like to time-travel and fly and all that other kind of cool superhero stuff. It's like being a version of a superhero, which is great.

Of course, you're arguably not a hero anymore...

There's a part of me that always just wants to play a heroic character who can do no wrong, but the problem is that it gets a little boring. And the truth is, Castiel taking this dark turn is something that is actually consistent

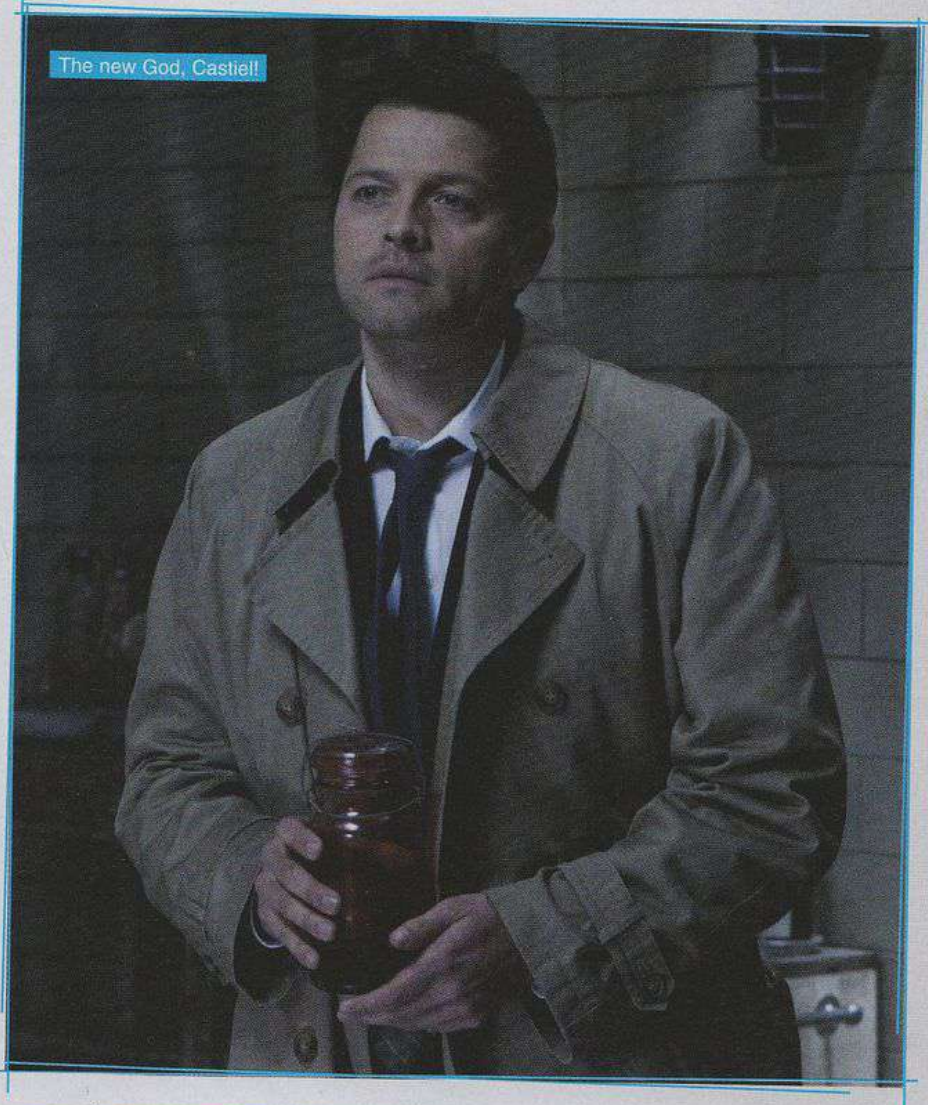
"When Castiel was introduced to the show in the first episode of season four [*Lazarus Rising*], he was originally intended to be a more minor character, but Castiel introduced the entire mythology of angels and Heaven."

> **"Castiel taking this dark turn is something that is actually consistent with the character."**

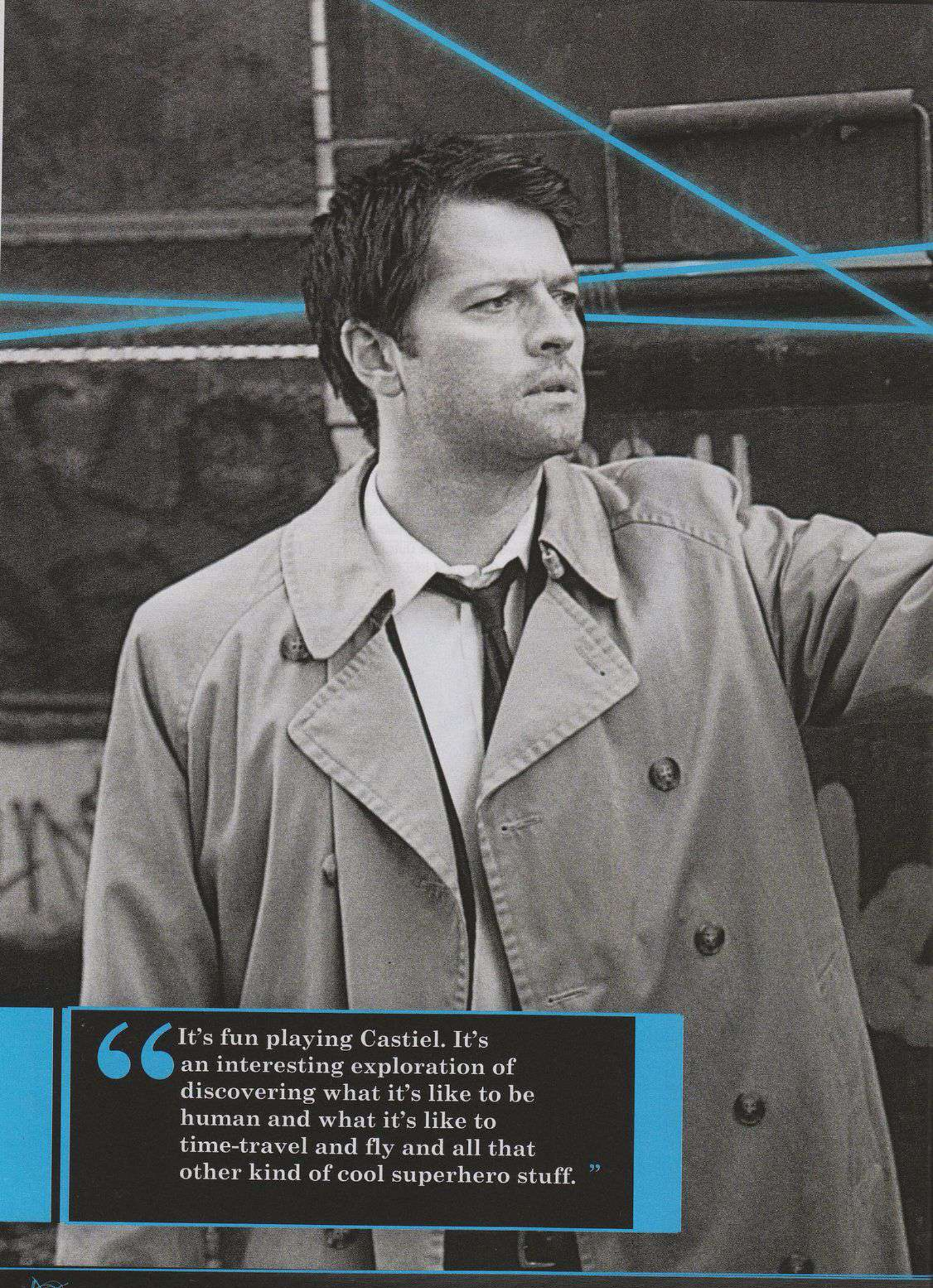
with the character. I mean, in the very beginning when Castiel was first introduced, he was advocating killing every man, woman, and child in a small village in order to make sure that a certain witch was destroyed. And Sam and Dean were like, "Hey, hey, that's a lot of collateral damage. We can find another way." And he reluctantly went along, but collateral damage honestly is something that Castiel's character has been okay with from the beginning, and I think that's also consistent with biblical lore about angels. Angels are these righteous, smite-y beings. [The Book of] Revelation forecast that angels will come down and kill half the fish in the sea and a third of all the beasts on the land and dry up the rivers and do whatever bad things make your car batteries die. They're beings who aren't afraid to kill and destroy. And I think what Castiel [did] with the souls is a good choice for the storyline of the show. We'll see...

With Castiel apparently gone, do you think God will bring him back like he did the other times?

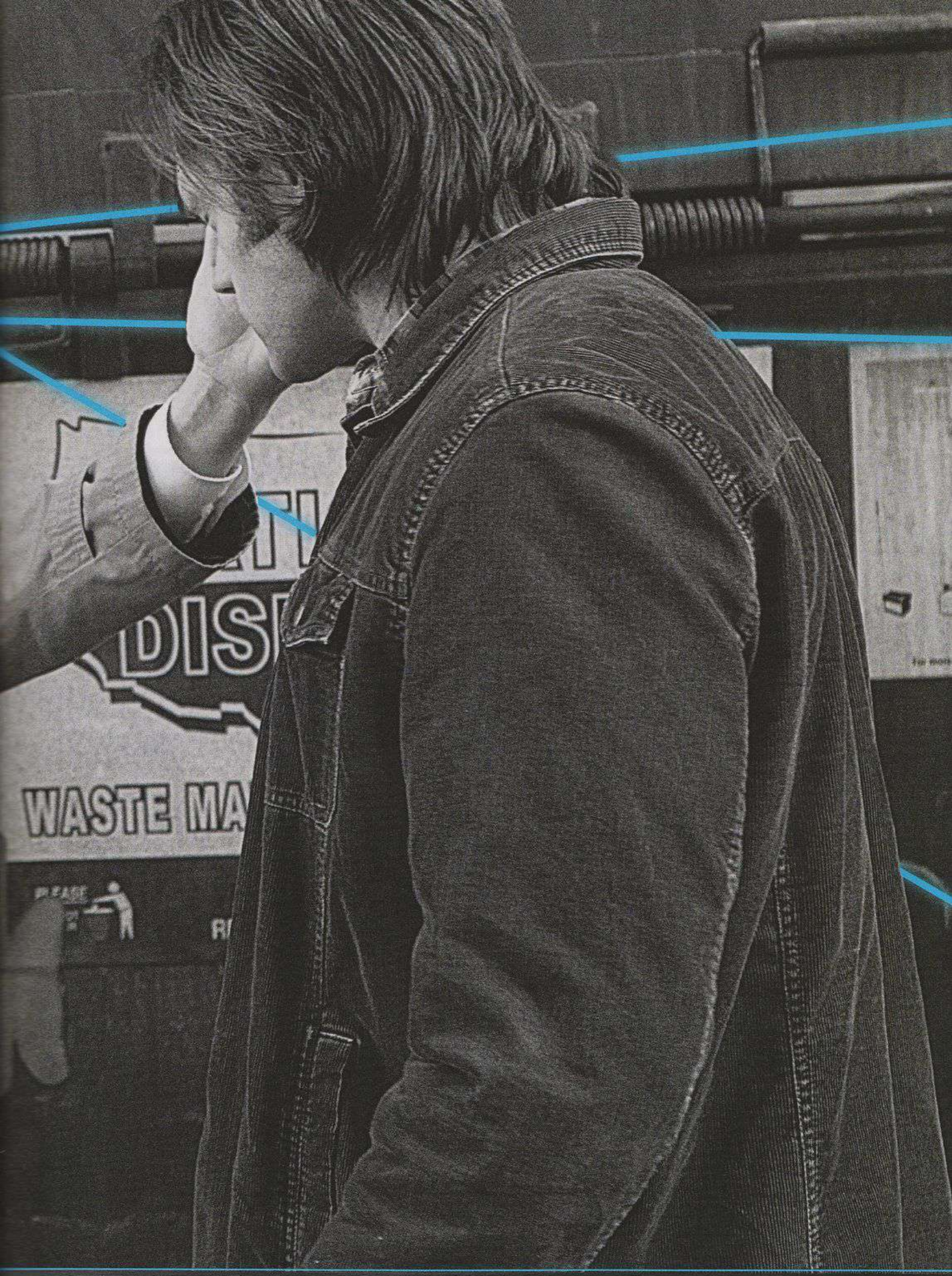
Now [I've been] God, so hopefully I could bring myself back!



The new God, Castiel!



"It's fun playing Castiel. It's an interesting exploration of discovering what it's like to be human and what it's like to time-travel and fly and all that other kind of cool superhero stuff."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